The Man in the Middle: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Gui-feng Zong-mi

by

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Abstract

This thesis presents a biographical study of the Tang Dynasty monk Gui-feng Zong-mi (780-841) together with an introduction to his thought. The biography contained herein draws upon original biographical and autobiographical sources to provide as complete a picture of the life of Zong-mi as possible within the scope of this thesis. Zong-mi defied categorization in both the manner in which he lived his life and his religious philosophy. He is simultaneously honored as a patriarch in both the Chan and Hua-yan Schools of Buddhism, while also being well-versed in the Confucian classics. As a model of Chinese Buddhist syncretism, he was able to create harmonious interaction between rival schools and religious systems in his writings and his practice. With a foot in both the exegetical and meditative traditions, Zong-mi was able to combine the best of both approaches to Buddhist religious life and philosophy.

A native of Sichuan, Zong-mi entered Buddhism through the He-ze lineage of Southern Chan. He first experienced awakening while reading a passage from the *Yuan-jue jing* and pledged himself to explicating that text. After encountering the writings of the Fourth Hua-yan Patriarch, Cheng-guan, Zong-mi sought him out and changed his affiliation to Hua-yan. He maintained close ties with the Chan tradition, because he perceived the exegetical and meditative approaches were complementary. Zong-mi enjoyed a prosperous career and received numerous honors, including the purple robe granted by the emperor. Following his involvement in the Sweet Dew Incident of 835, he disappeared from view.

Zong-mi was primarily driven by soteriological concerns. More specifically, he worked to develop a doctrinal basis for meditative practice and his major contributions to Chinese Buddhist thought lie in this area. The model which he developed drew from the Hua-yan vision of the harmonious interpenetration of principle and phenomena, and he used this as a basis for Chan meditative practice. This model, advocating sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation, was based on his understanding of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith.*

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Abbreviations

BC	*Buddhism in China*
BUT	*Buddhism Under the T'ang*
CFHB	*Chih-yen and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism*
DSC	*Yuan Jue Jing Da Shu Chao*
LSC	*Yuan Jue Jing Lue Shu Chao*
NSCB	*The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*
PSHS	*The P'an-chiao System of the Hua-yen School*
SGSZ	*Song Gao Seng Zhuan*
SH	*A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*
T	*Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*
TMSB	*Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*
TW	*Qin Ding Quan Tang Wen*
XZJ	*Xu Zang Jing*

Introduction

This thesis presents a biographical study of the Tang Dynasty 唐朝 monk Gui-feng Zong-mi 圭峯宗密 (780-841) together with an introduction to his thought. Zong-mi defied categorization in both the manner in which he lived his life and his religious philosophy. He is simultaneously honored as a patriarch in both the Chan 禅宗 and Hua-yan 華嚴宗 Schools of Buddhism, while also being well-versed in the Confucian classics. The biography contained herein draws upon original biographical and autobiographical sources to provide as complete a picture of the life of Zong-mi as possible within the scope of this thesis.

While there are already excellent biographies of Zong-mi written by established scholars in the field, this study presents the material from a slightly different angle.[1] The preparation and construction of this thesis was predicated upon a desire to probe more deeply into the life of a man who succeeded in weaving two clashing and conflicting religious systems into a harmonious mutually-complementary tapestry of Buddhist thought. Who was this person who not only rendered the sudden-gradual debate moot but also overcame the chasm which existed between the exegetical

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[1]See works by Peter Gregory, Jan Yun-hua, and Jeffrey Broughton listed in the bibliography.

and practice-oriented schools? In seeking to answer this question, I have drawn from primary source materials and sought to present his biography in such a way so as to highlight the major turning points in Zong-mi's life and provide insight into his character and motivations. Since we are fortunate to possess his autobiographical writings, I have let Zong-mi speak for himself whenever possible.

The third chapter, "An Introduction to Zong-mi's Thought," introduces a translation of *The Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren (Da Shi Shan-ren shi-wen)* 答史山人十問. This short essay contains a concise description of Zong-mi's vision of Buddhist practice. His primary concern is to direct Shi Shan-ren, a layman, toward correct practice and views.

I. Organization

Chapter One sets the stage by describing the historical conditions of the late Tang and a brief history of the Chan and Hua-yan schools with which Zong-mi was affiliated. Zong-mi's life fell between the An Lu-shan Rebellion 安録山 (755-763) and Emperor Wu-zong's 武宗 (r.840-846) persecution of Buddhism in 845. The decline of the authority and power of the imperial court and the increasing strength of the provincial governors had a great impact on Buddhism. The growth of the Chan School and the new direction of the Hua-yan School reflected this change in the political arena.

Chapter Two is a study of the life of Zong-mi. As a young man, he studied the Confucian teachings in preparation for the imperial

examinations, but in his twenties he "left the household life" after a momentous encounter with a Chan monk. For the next several years, Zong-mi studied under several masters from different Buddhist traditions. Zong-mi was a prolific author and composed works on a variety of Buddhist topics as well as in different *genres*. After finally coming across the Hua-yan Fourth Patriarch Cheng Guan's 澄觀 commentary on the *Hua-yan Sutra* 華嚴經, Zong-mi decided to pledge his allegiance to the school devoted to the explication of this text and became a disciple of Cheng Guan. He enjoyed tremendous popularity and received imperial recognition. His many connections eventually led him into trouble when he became involved in the Sweet Dew Incident *(Gan-lu zhi bian)* 甘露之變 of 835.

An introduction to Zong-mi's thought is presented in Chapter Three. This chapter is divided into three sections, focussing on his classification of Buddhist doctrine, evaluation of Chan, and a translation of his *Response to the Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren.*

II. Notes on Sources

The primary contribution of this thesis lies in its incorporation of original source materials as presented in Chapter Two and Section Three of Chapter Three. Chapter Two, which provides the account of Zong-mi's life, is based upon extant biographical and autobiographical sources. The biographies of Zong-mi incorporated into this thesis were the *Song gao-seng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 by Zan-ning 贊寧, the

epitaph written by Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?-860), and the *Jing-de chuan-deng lu* 景德傳燈録; all of the translations for these texts are given in the appendix.

Each biography presents a different perspective on the life of Zong-mi. Of these, only Pei Xiu's represents an account written by a contemporary of Zong-mi. As a close friend of Zong-mi's and a devoted Buddhist, Pei Xiu's epitaph provides insight into the character and life ofZong-mi which could only have been ascertained by someone who knew him personally. However, the bonds of friendship also imposed certain restraints, as may be seen in the glaring omission of the Sweet Dew Incident from the biography. Pei Xiu apparently chose not to become involved in the various controversies surrounding Zong-mi's writings and his conversion from Chan to Hua-yan.[2] Two versions of the epitaph were used in preparing the biography presented in this thesis, the *Qin ding quan tang wen* 欽定全唐文 and the *Jin-shi cui-bian* 金石萃編. The former was used to clarify the latter, which contained numerous errors and oddly printed characters. However, the *Jin-shi cui-bian* version was chosen as the primary text since several of the appended essays proved interesting and useful.

The *Song Gao-seng zhuan* is the standard biography composed by Zan-ning over a hundred years after Zong-mi's death. Although it

[2]Jan Yun-hua also mentions the fact that at the time Pei composed the epitaph of Zong-mi, some people connected with Zong-mi were still alive; he also notes that Pei made no mention of Zong-mi's criticisms of Han Yu's 韓愈 (768-824) theories on Confucianism (*Portrait and Self-portrait* 231).

drew much of its information from Pei Xiu's account, Zan-ning also added new information to fill in some of the gaps. This is where we read of Zong-mi's involvement in the Sweet Dew Incident and how he narrowly escaped execution.

The third biographical source was the *Jing-de chuan-deng lu*. This text is a record of the "transmission of the lamp" of the Chan School composed in 1004. Although Zong-mi changed his affiliation from Chan to Hua-yan, he continued to contribute to Chan philosophy and its role in Chinese Buddhism. While the *Jing-de* provides little new information on the life of Zong-mi, it contains a summary and excerpts from the *Chan Source* as well as the text for *The Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren,* and for this reason it was tremendously useful.

Researchers on Zong-mi are extremely fortunate to possess his autobiographical writings which are contained in his commentaries on the *Yuan-jue jing* 圓覺經 and letter to Cheng Guan. These sources are invaluable for the wealth of material they contain describing Zong-mi's life experiences in his own words. His writings provide insight into the circumstances and reasons behind the major events of his life.

Let us now begin with by setting the historical context for the life and career of Zong-mi.

Chapter One

Gui-feng Zong-mi was a man who was often in the middle. He defied categories and broadened definitions while employing his talents to bridge the gaps between competing idealogies. As this applied to the realm of Chinese Buddhism in the late Tang Dynasty, Zong-mi is honored as a patriarch simultaneously in both Chan and Hua-yan. His mission was to apply a doctrinal basis to meditative practice.

I. The Historical Background

Zong-mi lived in the period following the An Lu-shan Rebellion (755-763) and died four years prior to Emperor Wu-zong's persecution of Buddhism in 845. The An Lu-shan Rebellion had a serious impact on Buddhist institutions, particularly the Hua-yan School and He-ze 荷沢 line of Southern Chan, since both had close ties to the imperial court.

The An Lu-shan Rebellion was a major turning point for Buddhism in the Tang. The Rebellion itself may be likened to an earthquake. The quake caused widespread destruction and dislocation, and the aftershocks reverberated for a long time afterward. Once rebuilt, the reconstructed dynasty was of a

fundamentally different character. Even though the Tang ruling house was restored, it was an ambiguous victory over the rebels,since the rebellion ended with the death of the rebel leader rather than a decisive military victory. The central government was broke and drastically weakened, for now power had transferred to the military governors in the provinces. Additionally, the ruling house no longer commanded the respect that it previously had. This shift in power and resources influenced Buddhist institutions in various ways.[3]

In order to alleviate its dismal financial circumstances and pay for its protracted war against the rebel armies, in 755 the imperial government decided to legalize the sale of ordination certificates. This had a dramatic effect on both the official treasury and the Buddhist establishment. Ordination of thousands of "monks" rendered them tax-exempt and flooded the monasteries with persons who were praying to protect their pocketbooks. The number of legally ordained Buddhist clergy in 830 was at least double that of a century earlier.[4]

In addition to the spiritual damage suffered by the monastic system due to the influx of pseudo-monks, the physical entities of Buddhism were also severely damaged by the marauding rebel and imperial forces fighting in Chang-an and Luo-yang. These two cities

[3]Weinstein discusses the effects of the An Lu-shan rebellion on the Buddhist establishment in *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (59-65), from which this summary is derived.

[4]*BUT* 61.

housed numerous monasteries of the more scholarly Buddhist traditions, which resulted in the loss of innumerable manuscripts, treatises, and commentaries. While some of these writings were preserved in Korea and Japan, the loss of important literature caused irreparable damage to some schools in China.[5]

A third area in which the Buddhist community felt the impact of the An Lu-shan Rebellion's aftermath was in the shift in economic and military power and political influence from the imperial capital to the provinces. The emerging provincial military governors and other officials altered patterns of patronage for Buddhist monks. These men "increasingly appear[ed] as protectors of the faith."[6] The imperial court was no longer the only influential patron of Buddhism and subsequent doctrinal development reflected this trend. The patronage of the provincial governors and military officers after the rebellion

> ...signified the end of the period of the "elitist" philosophical schools of Buddhism developed by monks like Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 (Fa-hiang 法相 School), Tao-hsüan 道宣 (Vinaya 律 School), Fa-tsang 法藏 (Hua-yen School), Shen-hsiu 神秀 (Northern Ch'an School), all of whom worked in the great imperially endowed monasteries of Ch'ang-an 長安 and Lo-yang 洛陽.[7]

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[5]Weinstein notes that the Chinese Fa-xiang school became extinct following the An Lu-shan Rebellion but survived in Japan (*BUT* 61).

[6]*BUT* 62.

[7]*BUT* 62.

The earlier "elitist" character of the above schools was gradually replaced by a more "popular" orientation, as can be seen in the work of the Fourth Patriarch Cheng-guan and Zong-mi. While both of these monks received imperial patronage and honors, they also addressed the concerns and requests of individuals and a more widespread audience. Cheng-guan, for instance, wrote a number of works at the request of provincial officials,[8] while Zong-mi wrote several works geared to lay Buddhist practice.[9] These two patriarchs also had a strong attachment to Chan, which was popular among the military patrons, and incorporated elements of Chan into Hua-yan.

II. The Lineages of Hua-yan and Chan

> Some said, "Is Master Mi a Chan master, a *Vinaya* master, or a commentator on the *sutras* 經?" Responding to this, I say, "As for Zong-Mi, he is a country fought over on four sides. No one is able to call him their own, yet all may say that he is very wise and completely enlightened."[10]

Gui-feng Zong-mi was not a figure who could be easily bracketed within a particular tradition or discipline. As noted above

[8]*BUT* 62.

[9]See his commentary on the *Ullambana* and his outline for a retreat, the *Yuan-jue jing dao-chang xiu-cheng yi.*

[10]3b:3-5.

by the biographer, Zan-ning, Zong-mi's legacy was fought over by those "successors" who were anxious to claim a stake in his accomplishments and associate themselves with him. His scholarship was extensive and broad in scope, ranging from commentaries on the *sutras* to an outline for a retreat.[11] Zong-mi sought to overcome the divisions between meditative practice and the study of scripture.

The Tang period saw the emergence of Chan as a major force in Buddhism which could not be ignored. Its very existence represented a threat to the Buddhist establishment and challenged the notion of what constituted true Buddhist practice. Battle lines were quickly drawn between the exegetical traditions and the Chanists as each side struggled for imperial recognition and patronage. However, the debate was by no means confined to the court—"authentic Buddhism" was at stake. The divisions between the exegetes and Chanists represented fundamentally different approaches to Buddhism, characterized by those who entered through the gate of the *sutras*, and those who entered by way of meditation.

The Chan houses were also divided amongst themselves. In a debate that was just as bitter and heated as the *sutra-dhyana* rivalry, the Northern and Southern lineages of Chan were embroiled in a conflict over sudden versus gradual enlightenment. The Northern Chan lineage was associated with a gradual step-by-step approach to attaining enlightenment, while the Southern Chan

[11]See Gregory's article, "Tsung-mi's Perfect Enlightenment Retreat."

lineage (from which Zong-mi claimed descent) was associated with a sudden approach to enlightenment.

Particularly when viewed against the above considerations, the question of lineage could not be taken lightly. Having entered Buddhism through the Chan School and maintaining strong ties with Chan, Zong-mi could not escape the influence of the sudden-gradual rivalry. On the other hand, since he had switched his affiliation to the exegetical Hua-yan School, he was also touched by the *sutra-dhyana* debate. Zong-mi's own response to this strife took a very positive direction in that he promoted "sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation" and sought to develop a doctrinal basis for meditative practice. Zong-mi himself wrote an account of the houses and lineages of the Chan School in his *Chan Chart* in order to provide, among other considerations, a history and reference guide of Chan. We can see from his emphasis on syncretism that the question of lineage and affiliation remained important considerations throughout his life,and strongly influenced the development of his writings and theories of religious thought and practice.

The lineage histories presented here are designed to provide both an historical context for the schools themselves and also for determining Zong-mi's place within these lineages. He is honored as a patriarch in both the Hua-yan and Chan traditions even while the two schools have taken different paths.

A. Zong-mi's Hua-yan Lineage

The conception of the idea of a line of patriarchs for the Hua-yan school began with Zong-mi when he wrote his commentary on the *Hua-yan fa-jie guan-men* 華嚴法界觀門, entitled the *Zhu hua-yan fa-jie guan-men* 注華嚴法界觀門. In this work, he listed Du-shun 杜順 (558-640), Zhi-yan (602-668) 智儼, and Fa-zang (643-712) as the three patriarchs of the Hua-yan tradition. In the thirteenth century, Zhi-pan 志磐 added Cheng-guan (738-839)[12] and Zong-mi to create what is now the traditional five-patriarch lineage of the Hua-yan School in his *Fo-zu tong-ji* 佛祖統紀.[13]

The selection of Du-shun as the first patriarch of Hua-yan has stimulated much debate as to whether or not he can rightly be called the true founder of the school. Some scholars have proposed that the true founder was Zhi-yan, while even more have suggested that Fa-zang, as the systemizer of Hua-yan doctrine, is the only legitimate "first patriarch." When we examine the life and work of Du-shun, he seems an unlikely figure to be credited with founding such an exegetical and scholarly tradition as Hua-yan. His biography in the *Xu gao-seng zhuan* 續高僧傳 is included under the category of "thaumaturges" and describes Du-shun as a wandering miracle-worker who travelled the countryside ministering to the common people and lay Buddhists.

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[12]Variants of this date are (738-840), Chang 238.

[13]*CFHB* 57.

Very little biographical information exists on the life of Du-shun. The various hagiographies all testify to his miraculous powers which resulted from profound meditation. He is reputed to have cured the sick and advised the Emperor, while his compassion and wisdom were an inspiration to all and led many to the path of the Buddha.

Du-shun has traditionally been hailed by the Hua-yan School as its founder primarily due to his attributed authorship of the *Hua-yan fa-jie guan-men*. The *Guan-men* was a major force in the development and sinification of Chinese Buddhism in general, and the Hua-yan School in particular. However, Du-shun's authorship of this work is doubtful.[14] Whether or not Du-shun actually wrote the *Guan-men* may never be resolved, but it is clear, as Gimello demonstrated in *CFHB*, that Du-shun did have a connection with the *Hua-yan Sutra*.

Du-shun's most well-known disciple was Zhi-yan, who is counted as the second patriarch in the Hua-yan lineage. Fa-zang wrote a biography of Zhi-yan in his *Hua-yan jing zhuan-ji (Zhuan-ji)* 華嚴經傳記 which describes Zhi-yan's piety in typically exaggerated terms.[15] After Zhi-yan demonstrated a remarkable inclination towards Buddhism as a child, Du-shun appeared at the twelve-year-old's home to claim him as a disciple. Under the tutelage of Du-

[14]For a discussion of the question of Du-shun's authorship, see *CFHB* 80-93.

[15]All information presented from this source is summarized from Gimello's translation in the *CFHB* 59-60, 148-153.

shun's senior disciple, Zhi-yan learned Sanskrit and entered the novitiate at age fourteen. Although he studied a broad array of Indian Buddhist texts, Zhi-yan "took the many teachings to be a profuse desert and the sea of wisdom a vacant depth [in which] he knew not yet what to employ as a compass."[16] In spite of his extraordinary intellectual capacity and skill in studying the Buddhist texts, Zhi-yan felt that he had not discerned their unifying principle. Within the maze of teachings he sought a means of clarifying the "trackless wilderness of often conflicting and inefficacious doctrines."[17] Entrusting himself to the "hand of faith," he selected the *Avatamsaka Sutra* from the collection of scriptures and began a serious study of this text.[18] However, he became discouraged when his doubts were not removed. Soon afterwards, a strange monk spontaneously appeared and instructed him to meditate upon the doctrine of the "six aspects" in the *Dasabhumika-sutra* 十地經 for one or two months, whereupon he would then achieve understanding.[19] This strange monk then disappeared. Yan followed these instructions and became awakened in less than a month at the age of twenty-six. Following this experience, Zhi-yan composed his first commentary on the *Hua-yan Sutra*, the *Da-fang-guang fo hua-yan jing sou-xuan fen-*

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[16]*CFHB* 151.

[17]*CFHB* 158.

[18]*CFHB* 151.

[19]The *Dasabhumika* is contained in the larger *Hua-yan Sutra*.

qi tong-zhi fang-gui (Sou-xuan ji) 大方廣華嚴經搜玄分齊通智方軌. Fa-zang's account continues with a dream in which Zhi-yan "received secretly the seal of approval from a spirit-youth" in response to his prayers for guidance in interpreting of the *dharma*.[20] Consequently, he chose to follow the example of his master, Du-shun, and spent much of the next twenty years wandering the countryside. Zhi-yan did not enter public life until the late 640's, when he entered the capital and began to lecture on the *dharma*. In Chang-an, he also resumed his writing career and composed such works as the *Sou-xuan ji*. In 661, the emperor appointed him chief lecturer.

As Gimello emphasizes, it is significant to note that when Zhi-yan ultimately became dissatisfied with his broad study of Indian Buddhist philosophical systems, he turned directly to the word of the Buddha to resolve his doubts. This turn away from the pre-formulated philosophy of revered Indian masters to seek an authentic Chinese Buddhist interpretation of the *dharma* was in keeping with the "new Buddhism of the Sui and Tang."[21] Zhi-yan's choice of the *Hua-yan Sutra* as the focus of his concentration and energy was also influenced by his association with Du-shun.[22]

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[20]*CFHB* 153. Gimello notes that this is indicative of the "authenticity" of his understanding.

[21]This expression was coined by Yuki Reimon in several articles.

[22]Gimello suggests that Zhi-yan's choice of the *Hua-yan Sutra* was influenced more by his study of the text under Du-shun than by the "hand of faith" (*CFHB* 159).

Fa-zang (643-712), a disciple of Zhi-yan, is traditionally honored as the third patriarch of the Hua-yan School; yet due to his tremendous work in systematizing Hua-yan doctrine, he is also credited with being the *de facto* founder of the school.[23] Fa-zang was born of Sogdian ancestry in the imperial city of Chang-an, where his father was an official in the Chinese government. He studied under Zhi-yan in the capital from 662 until the master's death in 668. His career was launched when he attracted the notice of Empress Wu 武后, who ordered him to receive the tonsure and thereupon installed him as the abbot of the Tai-yuan si 太原寺.[24] Empress Wu remained a very generous benefactor of Fa-zang throughout his life, providing him with the political and financial support necessary to systematize the doctrines of Hua-yan and elevate the school to a position of prominence within the Chinese Buddhist world. Empress Wu, who usurped the throne and founded her own dynasty, was a devout Buddhist and descendant of the pro-Buddhist Sui imperial family.[25] As a means of legitimizing her rule and disassociating herself from the Tang Dynasty, she officially decreed that Buddhism was superior to Daoism and actively sought to patronize a Buddhist

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[23]Much of the information for this section on Fa-zang is gleaned from Weinstein's "Imperial Patronage" (297-305).

[24]Empress Wu erected this monastery in memory of her deceased mother.

[25]For a discussion of Empress Wu's relationship to Buddhist institutions, see Weinstein's "Imperial Patronage" (298) and *Buddhism Under the T'ang*.

school which was unaffiliated with any previous ruling house. The Empress was attracted to the vision and doctrines of Hua-yan, which became the pre-eminent school under her reign. In 674, she granted Fa-zang the highest ordination rank *(man-fen-jie)* 滿分戒 and the title of Xian-shou 賢首, by which he, and consequently the Hua-yan School, are often known. Empress Wu commissioned the Khotanese monk, Siksananda, to write a new translation of the *Hua-yan Sutra* and appointed Fa-zang to act as his personal secretary. This monumental task commenced in 695 and the empress herself served on the editorial board. Upon the completion of the new edition in 699, Empress Wu invited Fa-zang to give a lecture on the *Hua-yan Sutra* at the palace. One of Fa-zang's most famous works, *Treatise on the Golden Lion (Jin-shi-zi-zhang)* 金師子章, was expounded expressly for the empress to clarify points of the *Hua-yan Sutra*. One of Fa-zang's most important achievements was his doctrinal classification system *(pan-jiao)* 判教, in which he organized the major systems of Buddhist thought prevalent during his day. Upon his death in 712, Fa-zang was granted a posthumous court rank by the Emperor Rui-zong 睿宗 (r.710-712).

The fourth patriarch, Cheng-guan (737-838), was born approximately twenty-six years after the death of Fa-zang and therefore could not be considered his disciple or a direct heir to the Third Patriarch's teachings. Fa-zang's most prominent disciple was Hui-yuan 慧苑 (ca.673-743), who was denied the title of fourth patriarch largely due to the fact that Cheng-guan disapproved of his

views.[26] Cheng-guan castigated Hui-yuan for his critique of Fa-zang's *pan-jiao* and branded him a heretic for his deviation from the Third Patriarch's vision. Instead, Cheng-guan, the student of Hui-yuan's own disciple, Fa-shen 法身 (718-778), was granted the title of Fourth Patriarch. Cheng-guan enjoyed a truly illustrious career during his long life. He commenced study of the Buddhist scriptures at a young age and entered a monastery at the age of eleven.[27] While still a novice, Cheng-guan studied a wide array of *sutras* and *sastras* 論, such as the *Prajñaparamita)* 大智度經 *(Da-zhi-du jing*, *Nirvana-sutra* 佛臨涅槃記法住經, *Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論, and others. He also read works by Du-shun, Fa-zang, and others. After receiving ordination in the *Vinaya* tradition at the age of twenty, he wandered about receiving instruction from a variety of different masters, including the great Tian-tai 天台 Master Zhan-ran 湛然 (711-782) from 775-776. It is well known that Cheng-guan studied Chan during his career, but precisely which schools and under which masters remains controversial. Regardless of whether Cheng-guan actually trained in the Niu-tou 牛頭宗, He-ze, and Northern Chan traditions, it is clear that he was extremely knowledgeable as to the teachings of the Chan schools of his day. In 776, Cheng-guan began a

[26]Cheng-guanvociferously criticized of Hui-yuan on various topics. Gregory includes several of Cheng-guan's remarks in *TMSB*, from which this information is derived.

[27]I am following Gregory's translation of Pei Xiu's epitaph here. Chang asserts that Cheng-guan became a monk at the age of fourteen (238), while Gregory notes that the *SGSZ* states that he entered the monastery at ten. Most of the information on Cheng-guan presented here follows Gregory's account in *TMSB* (61-68).

fifteen-year period of residence at Mount Wu-tai 五泰山, during which he composed his massive commentary and subcommentary to the new translation of the *Hua-yan Sutra*, the *Da-fang-guang fo hua-yan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, and *Da-fang-guang fo hua-yan jing sui-shu yan-yi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演緯義鈔.[28] The publication of these works secured Cheng-guan's status as the leading Chinese authority on Hua-yan. It was also his discovery of these texts which led Zong-mi to shift his allegiance to the Hua-yan school and become a disciple of Cheng-guan in 812. By the time Zong-mi came to study under Cheng-guan, the master had received the purple robe and the title of Qing-liang Fa-shi 清涼法師 from Emperor De-zong 德宗 (r.779-805). From this time until Cheng-guan's death in 838, a succession of emperors conferred various awards and titles upon him. As will be discussed in the following chapter, there can be no doubt that Cheng-guan's prestige and influence at court helped to propel Zong-mi's subsequent career.

B. Zong-mi's Chan Lineage

Whereas the Hua-yan lineage is fairly simple to reconstruct, the He-ze line of Southern Chan is far more complicated. The lineage takes its name from He-ze Shen-hui 荷沢 神會 (684-758), the renegade monk who championed Hui-neng 回能 as the sole legitimate heir to the teachings of Chan's Fifth Patriarch, Hong-ren

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[28]Altogether, Cheng-guan's writings on the Hua-yan Sutra totalled over 400 *juan*. Compare this to the *Sutra* itself, which is eighty *juan* in Siksananda's translation.

弘忍. According to legend, the Chan School traces its origins in China to Bodhidharma, the Indian *dhyana (chan-na)* master who is credited with bringing the *dhyana* tradition to China, where it then flourished under the name of Chan. Beyond Bodhidharma, the line extends to Kashyapa, who received the mind-to-mind transmission directly from the Buddha. Pei Xiu wrote in Zong-mi's epitaph:

> Shakyamuni Buddha has had 39 generations of dharma descendants....At last he entrusted the dharma-eye only to the great Kashyapa and commanded that from patriarch to patriarch they should mutually transmit special practices to the world. These were not solely for Kashyapa, but [also for] non-Buddhist humans and devas, *sravakas*, and bodhisattvas....From Kashyapa to Bodhidharma there were altogether 28 generations....The Great Master is the fifth generation from He-ce; from Bodhidharma, he was 11th generation; from Kashyapa, he was the 38th generation.[29]

Bodhidharma then transmitted the *dharma* to Hui-ke 慧可, who is best remembered for his extraordinary act of self-mutilation. In order to win acceptance from Bodhidharma as a disciple, Hui-ke sought to demonstrate his sincerity and devotion by cutting off his own left arm. This action apparently convinced Bodhidharma to accept him as a disciple, and Hui-ke was ultimately honored with the title of Second Patriarch. The third and fourths patriarchs were Seng-can 僧 粲[30] and Dao-xin 道信 (580-651). Dao-xin then

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[29]*TW* 1a:1-1b:1, 1b:7-9, 2a:1-2, 2a:6-7.

[30]McRae notes that virtually nothing is known about Seng-can (26,30).

transmitted to Hong-ren (601-674) of the East Mountain Monastery, whose two students, Shen-xiu (606?-706) and Hui-neng (638-713), became the focus of what is likely the most heated succession debate in the history of Chan.[31] The legend as described in *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch (Liu-zu tan jing)* states that Hong-ren directed his disciples to compose a mind-verse to demonstrate their understanding of the *dharma* in order to determine who would be his successor and the next patriarch.[32] Only the senior disciple, Shen-xiu, composed a verse and anonymously inscribed it on a wall, which read,

> The body is the *bodhi* tree.
> The mind is like a bright mirror's stand.
> At all times we must strive to polish it
> and must not let dust collect.[33]

Hong-ren publicly praised the verse and instructed all of his disciples to recite it, yet he privately informed Shen-xiu that the verse did not display a true understanding of the *dharma*. While at work in the monastery, the illiterate layman, Hui-neng, overheard a young disciple reciting this poem and immediately recognized that the author's understanding was shallow. He thereupon dictated a second verse for the novice to write on the wall, which read,

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[31]McRae gives the dates for Hong-ren as (600-674).

[32]For a translation, see Philip Yampolsky's *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

[33]*NSCB* 1-2.

Bodhi originally has no tree.
The mirror has no stand.
The Buddha Nature is always clear and pure.
Where is there room for dust?[34]

When Hong-ren saw the verse, he publicly denounced it; but recognized that its author possessed deep insight. Later that night, he summoned Hui-neng to his quarters and expounded the *Diamond Sutra* to him. Hui-neng immediately attained enlightenment upon hearing the *sutra* and understood its full meaning. Then the Fifth Patriarch transmitted the Sudden Teaching to him and bestowed the robe of Bodhidharma upon him. The new Sixth Patriarch left the monastery late that night under the cover of darkness.

This legendary account of the secret transmission reflects many of the issues which were dividing the Chan community during the eighth century. The most obvious is the debate over who was the legitimate sixth patriarch. Shen-xiu initially enjoyed tremendous success as the Sixth Patriarch and his school flourished. He was widely acknowledged as an eminent authority on Chan and received the patronage of Empress Wu. Shen-xiu's lineage remained dominant until the rise of He-ze Shen-hui, who advanced a series of vicious attacks against the "Northern School and what he considered to be its inferior teachings of gradual enlightenment."[35] Shen-hui juxtaposed

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[34]*NSCB* 2.

[35]The terms "Northern" and "Southern" were created by Shen-hui to emphasize the differences between the schools of Shen-xiu and Hui-neng. Shen-xiu referred to his own school as the East Mountain School.

this degenerate teaching against the authentic teaching of sudden enlightenment taught by his master, the true Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng. Shen-hui launched the campaign in 730 and continued until his death in 758. The subsequent decline of the Northern school was traditionally attributed to Shen-hui's attacks; however, contemporary scholars have determined that this is not the case. Shen-hui's line of Southern Chan eventually eclipsed the Northern School to become the dominant lineage until it ultimately disappeared with the death of Zong-mi, the last patriarch of the He-ze line.

Another issue highlighted in the tale of the mind-verses is the debate over sudden versus gradual enlightenment. Shen-hui and his southern lineage accused the Northern School of teaching a gradualistic approach to enlightenment which was indicative of their faulty understanding of the *dharma* and the teaching of Bodhidharma as transmitted by Hong-ren. Although the sudden/gradual controversy had been debated in China since its introduction from India in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, by the eighth century the stakes had grown higher and the debate grew more intense.[36] Sudden versus gradual enlightenment was now a determining factor in patriarchal succession, imperial patronage, and

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Ultimately, Northern and Southern became the accepted terms.

[36]Broughton discusses the history of the

the rise or decline of Chan schools.[37] These were still tremendously important and relevant issues in Zong-mi's time. As we shall see in Chapter Three, the argument over sudden versus gradual enlightenment infused Zong-mi's thought and was a central component of his outline for Buddhist practice.

The He-ze lineage honored Shen-hui as its Seventh Patriarch, who then transmitted to Zhi-ru of Ci-zhou (723-811). Zhi-ru transmitted the *dharma* to his student Wei-zhong (d.821). Wei-zhong was also known by the name of Nan-yin and was surnamed Zhang. At this point that He-ze lineage becomes complicated, and Zong-mi's position within its line of transmission becomes uncertain.[38] Zong-mi outlined his Chan lineage in the *Chan Chart*, where he presents his line of descent as passing from Shen-hui to Zhi-ru, then to Wei-zhong, and finally to Dao-yuan 道圓, his own master. According to his own account, Zong-mi lies firmly in the tradition of He-ze Shen-hui.

The uncertainty surrounding Zong-mi's Chan lineage centers on the identity of Wei-zhong/Nan-yin and his teacher, Shen-hui. The *Song gao-seng zhuan* contains two different entries for the monks Wei-zhong and Nan-yin, who each studied under a master named Shen-hui. According to the *SGSZ* account, Wei-zhong (705-782) was

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[37]The growth of the Ox-head School *(Niu-tou zong)* is a case in point. This school arose as an alternative to the bitter debates between the Northern and Southern Schools. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* was compiled by a monk of this school.

[38]For a discussion of this problem see *TMSB* 35-52. The summary presented here is derived from this source.

surnamed Tong and a disciple of He-ze Shen-hui, while Nan-yin (d.821), surnamed Zhang, studied under Jing-zhong Shen-hui 淨衆神會. Fortunately, Gregory's research has shed some light on this issue, and he presents a convincing argument in *TMSB*.[39] The key to solving this puzzle was to properly identify the role of Nan-yin, who was indeed a different person from Tong Wei-zhong. However, Nan-yin did adopt the name Wei-zhong and in that context was known as Zhang Wei-zhong. He-ze Shen-hui and Jing-zhong Shen-hui represented different lines of transmission descending from the Fifth Patriarch Hong-ren his disciples, Hui-neng and Zhi-shen, respectively. Jing-zhong Shen-hui was the abbot of the Jing-zhong Monastery *(Jing-zhong si)* 淨衆寺 in Cheng-du, which was closely tied to the state as a monastery licensed to perform ordinations. Nan-yin appears to have studied with both Shen-hui's.[40] His biography in the *SGSZ* indicates that he studied with either He-ze Shen-hui or one of his disciples before he journeyed to Sichuan to enter Jing-zhong Shen-hui's monastery. In 807, Nan-yin was installed as the abbot of Sheng-shou Monastery *(Sheng-shou si)* 聖壽寺 in Cheng-du, which then became the focus of the Sheng-shou subtradition of Jing-

[39] Jan (in *Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism*) and Broughton have discussed this problem in their works and both have strongly refuted Hu Shih's suggestion that Zong-mi was being opportunistic and took advantage of the confusion to ally himself with He-ze Shen-hui, who by then had been officially declared the Seventh Patriarch by an imperial commission in 796. Gregory has amassed the most evidence to clarify the problem, and thus I follow his argument.

[40] *TMSB* 47-48.

zhong.[41] Even though Nan-yin only studied with He-ze Shen-hui (or his disciple) for a short period of time, following his appointment as abbot, he appears to have emphasized his association with the "official" Seventh Patriarch, perhaps to strengthen his position *vis-a-vis* other rival schools in the area. This establishes Zong-mi's good faith in asserting his lineal connection with the He-ze tradition, since it is now apparent that Nan-yin himself first stressed the connection.

Nan-yin transmitted the *dharma* to Zong-mi's first master teacher, Dao-yuan of Sui-zhou, about whom nothing further is known. The relationship between Dao-yuan and Zong-mi will be discussed in the following chapter.

[41]Gregory coined the name Sheng-shou for the subtradition.

Chapter Two

A Biographical Study of Zong-mi

In the introduction to his autobiographical statements in the *Yuan-jue jing da-shu chao* 圓覺經大疏鈔, Zong-mi divided the text--and his life--into five distinct sections. He wrote:

> There are five essays. The first concerns my fascination with the Way and virtue. The second discusses the fundamental principle of sudden awakening. The third deals with joining together illusion and enlightenment. The fourth is how I gradually cultivated practice and interpretation. The fifth deals with how the master (Cheng-guan) received and accepted me.[42]

This passage reflects Zong-mi's perception and evaluation of his own life through the year 823, when he was forty-three years old. As a reflection of his values, it also provides the reader with some insight into his character. In this biographical study of the life of Zong-mi, this author has adapted the subject's own formula and applied it as a framework to define the major turning points in his life. These highlighted events have each had a major impact on the course of Zong-mi's life. There are two notable changes: one is the

[42]*DSC* 222a:11-13.

re-positioning of his cultivation of practice and interpretation to the period following his encounter with Cheng-guan; the second is the addition of a sixth section to correspond with Zong-mi's involvement in the Sweet Dew Incident of 835. The re-placement of practice and interpretation was made to correspond more closely to Zong-mi's own understanding of the *dharma* and the development and maturation of his thought.

I. My Fascination with the Way and Virtue.

His biographies inform us that Gui-feng Zong-mi was a native of Xichong County 西充 of Guozhou 果州 in present-day Sichuan 四川. He was a member of the "eminent and prosperous" He 何 clan.[43] Zong-mi's family was apparently of sufficiently comfortable means and status as to furnish him with a thorough Confucian education in preparation for the imperial examinations. Zong-mi began his study of Confucian texts at the age of seven and continued until he was sixteen or seventeen. Pei Xiu (787?-860) remarked in the epitaph he wrote for Zong-mi that "at a young age he was well-versed in the Confucian classics."[44] Any examination candidate in the Tang period would have obtained a detailed knowledge of the Confucian classics, whether one was attempting the *ming-jing* 明經 (understanding the classics) degree or the *jin-shi* 進士 (advanced scholar) degree. The

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[43] *SGSZ* 1b:10.

[44] *TW* 2a:8.

latter examination also tested for excellence in literary composition and discussions of policy. Success in the imperial examinations, particularly the *jin-shi* degree, opened up a wealth of opportunities in the Tang bureaucracy. Although exam graduates constituted a rather small percentage of civil servants overall, many of the highest positions within the bureaucracy were staffed by men holding the *jin-shi* degree.[45]

The *Song gao-seng zhuan* describes Zong-mi as "wanting to engage in worldly affairs in order to serve living beings," which indicates that he had intended to follow the traditional route into public service by taking the examinations.[46] However, "bearing superior talent, he still had to follow the Accounts Clerk [to travel for the examination]."[47] Protocol for the examination required that all candidates be guided by an accounts clerk to the imperial capital to sit for the examination. Zong-mi apparently felt insulted by this situation and decided against taking the examination.[48]

Although Zong-mi abandoned his plans to take the imperial examination, the influence of his Confucian education was very strong, and the mark of his education and facility with Confucian

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[45]Gregory notes that the sources are in disagreement over the actual percentage of exam graduates in the bureaucracy. Estimates range from six to sixteen percent (*TMSB* 32).

[46]*SGSZ* 2a:1.

[47]*SGSZ* 2a:1-2. See also footnote below.

[48]Based on personal correspondence with Jan Yun-hua, who graciously assisted me with this passage.

literature is evident throughout his writings. Later works of Zong-mi, including his autobiographical writings, display his familiarity with the standard Confucian and Daoist literature by means of many allusions, quotations, and discussions of passages from these texts.

Despite his childhood grounding in the Confucian texts, it appears that as he grew older, Zong-mi began to struggle with their intent.[49] Zong-mi wrote that, "during the period from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, I wore the white robes and resided in a simple hut listening to and studying the *sutras* and *sastras*."[50] Jan Yun-hua has proposed that these were the white robes of mourning and that Zong-mi was observing the ritual mourning period for his parents at this time.[51] Such an interpretation merges well with what we know of Zong-mi's life and character through his writings and the biographical sources. We do know that Zong-mi lost his parents while still young, for he has written:

> I, Zong-mi, must have committed a sin, as I lost my parents in my early age. Whenever I suffered from hard experience, I had eternal remorse for being unable to recall my parents to life and to look after them.[52]

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[49]See Jan, "Tsung-mi's Questions Regarding the Confucian Absolute."

[50]*Yuan-jue jing lue-shu chao* 106a:2-3.

[51]See Jan, "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism" in *T'oung Pao* LVIII, p.6-7.

[52]Ibid.,6.

Zong-mi's strong commitment to Confucian filial piety is apparent in this passage, yet is important to note this was the time when he began to evince an interest in Buddhism. The mental anguish he was suffering at this time may have been the driving force behind his investigation of Buddhist teachings. Perhaps he could not find satisfactory solutions to the enigma of death and bereavement within the Confucian tradition. Certainly during such a period of crisis as this, one might expect that issues relating to the human condition would come to the forefront of his consciousness. We see evidence of Zong-mi grappling with larger issues and the conflicting pulls of both Confucianism and Buddhism in passages such as the above quote, taken from his commentary on the *Yu-lan-pen jing (Ullambana-sutra)* 盂蘭盆經. At the age of twenty-three, Zong-mi again took up the study of Confucianism and entered the Academy of Philosophical Studies *(Yi-xue yuan)* 義學院 in Sui-zhou 隊州, where he advanced his studies for two years.

II. Encountering Propitious Conditions Leading to the Fundamental Principle of Sudden Awakening.

During his stay in Sui-zhou, Zong-mi had a chance encounter with the monk Dao-yuan.[53] It is likely that Zong-mi was attending a lecture of some sort, since both biographical sources state that he admired Dao-yuan even before they had exchanged words. When Zong-mi questioned him on the *dharma*, their minds bonded in

[53]No dates are available for Dao-yuan.

mutual understanding. This meeting was so momentous as to inspire Zong-mi to request Dao-yuan to accept him as a disciple, which he did. In Zong-mi's own words, he wrote: "Upon reaching twenty-four years of age, I encountered propitious conditions and left the household life."[54] He then took the tonsure and received Dao-yuan's teaching. Zong-mi considered his great fortune at meeting Dao-yuan to have exceeded even the metaphor of the needle and the mustard seed:[55]

> I questioned him on the *dharma* and our minds bonded just like the needle and mustard seed thrown together. The *sutras* explained how the Buddha questioned Kashyapa, "[Suppose a] mustard seed from Tushita Heaven revolves at the point of a neddle standing in Jambudvipa;[56] would throwing the mustard seed upon the point of one needle be difficult or easy?...obtaining a direct mutual encounter is even more difficult than this." But now we have met each other. Therefore, I say that we have been brought together in just such a rare way.[57]

Dao-yuan remains an elusive figure. Our only source of information regarding him comes from Zong-mi, who asserts that Dao-yuan inherited the *dharma* of Hui-neng following the He-ze lineage of Southern Chan. He stood as the fourth patriarch after He-

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[54]*LSC* 106a:4.

[55]Both Peter Gregory, in *TMSB*, and Jan Yun-hua translate a similar passage from the *Yuan Jue Jing Da Shu* as "...as a needle [to a magnet] or a tiny particle [to amber]."

[56]The central division of the world in Buddhist cosmology (*SH* 452a), or one of the four continents south of Mount Meru which comprised the world known to the early Indians (*SH* 298b).

[57]*LSC* 106d7-11.

ze Shen-hui. There are no writings attributed to Dao-yuan, nor is there an entry for him in the *Song gao-seng zhuan*.

Zong-mi was initially awakened while still a novice studying under Dao-yuan. In true Zong-mi style, this experience came about not while he was engaged in meditative practice, as might be expected of a Chan disciple, but through reading a few lines of scripture from the *Yuan Jue Jing*. He describes the experience:

> During the time that I was a novice in [Sui-zhou], I went in response to an invitation to a purification ritual *(zhai)* 齋 at the home of Ren-guan 任灌 in Fu-li . Following the chanting of scriptures, I received this *Scripture of Complete Enlightenment (Yuan-jue jing)*, and after I had read two pages, my unenlightened body and mind danced for joy. Nothing can compare to this [experience]. Henceforth, I have indulged in the pleasure [of studying the *Yuan-jue jing*] until today.[58]

The scripture which precipitated this event became the focus of much of Zong-mi's scholarly efforts throughout his life. He wrote a total of seven works connected with the *Yuan-jue jing* and devoted himself to propagating this *sutra*. Zong-mi even esteemed this native Chinese scripture above the *Hua-yan jing,* because he believed that its teachings were more accessible. He described the situation as follows:

> [The *Hua-yan jing*] is confusing and difficult to enter for those beginning their studies. It is like the way in which one is not able to seek after all the treasures within the

[58]*LSC* 106d:12-15.

> great ocean. Thus, it is not like this *[Yuan-jue jing]*, for which the whole Way may be entered at once.[59]

Zong-mi's sincere belief in the value of this *sutra*, both for its content and accessibility, compelled him to grant it pride of place in his redaction of the Hua-yan *pan-jiao* systems written by Zhi-yan and Fa-zang.

Following his training under Dao-yuan, Zong-mi travelled about studying under different teachers, as was the custom among Buddhist monks. He received full ordination under the Vinaya Master Zheng 鄭. Then Zong-mi visited Dao-yuan's own Master, Zhang 張 of Jing-nan 荊南 (d.821),[60] who described Zong-mi as "one who is fit to transmit the teachings," and encouraged him to travel to the imperial capital of Chang-an to do so.[61] He also visited Zhang's disciple Shen-zhao 神照 (776-838), who recognized Zong-mi as a potential *bodhisattva*.

III. Joining Together Illusion and Enlightenment.

Zong-mi was thirty years old in 830 when he met the Hua-yan monk, *acarya* Ling-feng 靈峯 while staying at the Great Enlightenment Monastery in Xiang-yang 襄陽寺. Ling-feng, a disciple of Cheng-guan, had been bed-ridden for several months and

[59] *LSC* 109d:8-10.

[60] Zhang is also known by his monastic name, Wei-zhong of Chengdu.

[61] *SGSZ* 2a:3-4.

was extremely emaciated. He appeared to be nearing his final hours when he gave Zong-mi a copy of Cheng-guan's commentary and subcommentary to the *Hua-yan jing*. Ling-feng died only a few days later. He and Zong-mi had not even finished discussing the texts. This was Zong-mi's introduction to Hua-yan thought, and he was taken aback by the commentary. The spiritual experience was intense—he described it as if he were a "thirsty person who had encountered sweet dew, or a poor [person] who had encountered a precious stone."[62] The text was Cheng-guan's gargantuan commentary on a monumental *sutra*, so it might be likened to dropping Zong-mi in the middle of a vast ocean. Zong-mi isolated himself for a period of study which was so intense that he forgot to eat or sleep. He used the subcommentary (ninety *juan*) to understand the commentary (sixty *juan*), and the commentary to understand the *sutra*.

This was the second major turning point for Zong-mi, and he endowed the event with karmic significance when he wrote that Ling-feng had managed to forestall his immanent death for the sole purpose of giving him this commentary. Thus, the two were karmically linked and Zong-mi's entry into the realm of Hua-yan was karmically predestined.

Zong-mi must have made great progress in his study of the commentary, since he gave a lecture on the *Hua-yan jing* before

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[62]T.1795; 39:577a, line 12. Gregory translates this as a "wish-fulfilling gem" (*TMSB* 59).

leaving the monastery and without having studied the actual scripture itself. His fascination with Cheng-guan's work and the encounter with Ling-feng drove him to seek out the master and petition him to become a disciple. At seventy-three years of age, Cheng-guan was at the peak of his career and resided in the imperial capital of Chang-an.

IV. Master Cheng-guan Received and Accepted Me.

On his way to Chang-an in 811, Zong-mi passed through Luo-yang to visit the tomb of He-ze Shen-hui but decided to stay and spend the summer retreat season at the Eternal Peace Monastery *(Yong-mu si)* 永穆寺. In the fall, the monks asked him to continue lecturing on the *Hua-yan Sutra*. He agreed to do so. Zong-mi was beginning to establish himself as a Hua-yan authority and as a speaker. Following his lecture on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth month, the monk Tai-gong 泰恭 was apparently so affected by Zong-mi's talk that he was inspired to cut off his own arm as an expression of his delight in the *dharma*.[63] His fellow disciples marvelled at Tai-gong's composure. Zong-mi related these events in a letter to Cheng-guan, and emphasized Tai-gong's extraordinary degree of composure. He could not leave until Tai-gong had recuperated from his self-

[63]It is likely that Tai-gong had in mind the example of Hui-ke, the second Chinese patriarch of Chan. Hui-ke cut off his arm to express the intensity of his devotion to the *dharma*, so as to compel Bodhidharma to accept him as a disciple.

inflicted mutilation and was afraid that the master would not receive him.

Cheng-guan's reply indicated that he would accept Zong-mi as a disciple but urged him to reprimand Tai-gong so as to discourage other zealous monks from taking such drastic action. Cheng-guan emphasized that the *dharma* encourages a disciple to "cut off passions and anxieties, not one's body; to cut off one's false mind, not one's limbs."[64] Zong-mi finally made it to Chang-an in 812 to begin a period of intense study with Cheng-guan. For two years, Zong-mi never left the master's side. Thereafter, Zong-mi and Cheng-guan maintained correspondence, so that even when he was lecturing in different monasteries, Zong-mi was free to consult the master whenever he had any questions. Cheng-guan evidently held Zong-mi in great esteem. As a measure of Zong-mi's capabilities, he is said to have remarked, "Who else but you is able to follow and roam with me in the Lotus-Womb of Vairocana?"[65] Zong-mi was the only disciple who ever really grasped the master's teachings.[66]

V. I Gradually Cultivated Practice and Interpretation.

[64]T.1795; 39:577c, line 18-20.

[65]*TW* 2b:2-3.

[66]This was according to Pei Xiu's epitaph. Broughton (quoting Kamata Shigeo) notes that legend has it that there were two disciples who mastered his teachings, Zong-mi and Seng-rui.

In 816, Zong-mi settled at the Torch of Wisdom Monastery *(Zhi-ju si)* 智炬寺 on Zhong-nan Mountain 終南山. Zhong-nan was a famous site of scholarly Buddhist activity in the Tang. The Chinese tradition of *Vinaya* study traces its origins to Dao-xuan's (596-667) work there. More importantly for Zong-mi, Du-shun and Zhi-yan had resided on the mountain, thereby linking it inextricably with the Hua Yan tradition. Zhong-nan housed many Buddhist monasteries, including Cao-tang near Gui Peak, by which Zong-mi would later come to be known.

Zong-mi composed his first works on Mount Zhong-nan: the *Yuan-jue jing zuan-yao* 圓覺經纂要 and *Yuan-jue jing ke-wen* 圓覺經科文. These two compositions, a compilation of the essential passages from the four commentaries on the *Yuan-jue jing* written by Wei-que, Wu-shi 悟実, Jian-zhi 堅志, and Dao-quan 道詮 plus an annotated outline, represent the first stages of his research into the *sutra*. Together with his private notes, they formed the basis for the authoritative commentaries which he finalized in 823 and 824.

Zong-mi pledged an oath not to descend Mount Zhong-nan until he had read through the entire Buddhist Canon. Beginning in 816, he devoted himself to this enormous task for three and a half years. Since Zhong-nan was the site of many Buddhist monasteries, Zong-mi availed himself of the resources at his disposal. He spent time at such monasteries as the Cloud Abode *(Yun-ju si)* 雪居寺, Grass Hut

(Cao-tang si) 草堂寺, Abundant Virtue *(Feng-de si)* 豐德寺, and others whose names he did not record.

Zong-mi wrote his next compositions in 819 while pursuing research at the Promotion of Blessings Monastery *(Xing-fu si)* 興福寺 in Chang-an. He drew upon the major points of the *sastras* written by Vasubandhu 天親 and Asanga 無著 in order to explain the *Diamond Sutra (Jin-gang jing)* 金剛經 for this commentary, the *Jin-gang bo-ruo jing shu lun zuan-yao* 金剛般若經疏論纂要 in one *juan* and a subcommentary, also in one *juan*.[67]

During his stay at the Promotion of Blessings and the Nourishing Longevity *(Bao-shou si)* 保寿寺 Monasteries from the winter of 819 to the spring of 820, Zong-mi composed the *Wei-shi song shu* 唯識頌疏 in two *juan*. He created his own explanation of the thirty verses of Vasubandhu by drawing on selected *sastras* and commentaries which would "manifest and clearly display the teachings of the Consciousness-Only School to lead people to easily see the principle that all *dharmas* are only one's own mind."[68] Jan Yun-hua notes that it was very unusual for a monk versed in Chan or Hua-yan to have been studying Yogacara philosophy in this period.[69]

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[67]Peter Gregory notes that the present extant edition of this work was redacted by Zi-xuan (d.1038), who probably combined the commentary and subcommentary into a single text (*TMSB* 317).

[68]*LSC* 109c:13-14.

[69]Jan "Tsung-mi's Analysis of Ch'an," 13.

In 822 at the Monastery of Abundant Virtue, Zong-mi ventured his first work on the *Hua-yan jing*, entitled *Threads Pervading the Hua Yan Sutra* 華嚴經論貫 in five *juan*. This was designed to coordinate the assorted "threads" in the *sutra* and elaborate on their meaning.

Zong-mi felt that there was a need for a guide to the *Vinaya* which disciples could easily use and refer to in their practice. With this in mind, he composed the *Commentary to the Dharmagupta Vinaya* 四分律疏 in 823 while at the Monastery of Abundant Virtue. Perhaps the setting inspired him, for the *Feng-de si* was associated with Dao Xuan. The *Song gao-seng zhuan* also lists a foreword in two *juan* and a *Si-fen lu-[zang] shu* in five *juan*.[70]

As mentioned above, Zong-mi commenced the fulfillment of his vow to transmit the *Yuan-jue jing* in 816 when he composed the *Yuan-jue jing zuan-yao* and the *Yuan-jue jing ke-wen*. He began concentrated work on a commentary in 822, after taking a year to "cut myself off completely and cease all ties so as to nourish and refine my nature and wisdom."[71] He gathered together his previous outline and compilation together with numerous *sutras*, *sastras*, and writings from the various Chan schools. He lists the *sastras* which he consulted to broaden his knowledge and understanding before undertaking this task: *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana (Da-*

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[70]Peter Gregory notes that the listing in the Dun-huang version of the Chan Preface corresponds to that of the *Song gao-seng zhuan* (*TMSB* 324).

[71]*LSC* 107a: 13.

sheng qi-xin lun), *Consciousness-Only (Wei-shi lun)* 唯識論, *Precious Nature (Bao-xing lun)* 賓性論, *Buddha-nature (Fo-xing lun)* 佛性論, *Meditation on the Mean (Zhong-guan lun)* 中観論, *Gathering Together the Great Vehicle (She da-sheng lun)* 摂大般論, *Perfection of Wisdom (Zhi-du lun)* 智度論, *Yogacara (Yu-jie lun)* 瑜伽論. Completing this work, the *Commentary on the Scripture of Complete Enlightenment (Yuan-jue jing da-shu)* 圓覺經大疏, was truly a milestone in Zong-mi's life. It represented the culmination of over ten years of work; and as the fulfillment of a religious vow, it also carried deep personal and spiritual significance. In an unusual addition, Zong-mi also chose to include his autobiography in his commentaries and subcommentaries to the *Yuan-jue jing*. This is where we find a first-hand account of the initial awakening he experienced by reading several lines from this text. In 823 he completed the *Yuan-jue jing da-shu* in twelve *juan*. Zong-mi's autobiographical comments conclude with the completion of the *Yuan-jue jing* commentaries.

Zong-mi was summoned away from his monastery to the palace by Emperor Wen-zong 文宗 (r.827-840) on the occasion of the imperial birthday in 828. After questioning him on the essentials of the *dharma*, the emperor bestowed upon Zong-mi the purple robe and the title "Most Virtuous" *(Da-de)* 大德.[72] Zong-mi spent two years in theChang-an and then requested to return to his monastery in the mountains.

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[72]The purple robe was bestowed upon selected prominent monks by the emperor during the Tang Dynasty as a sign of imperial recognition and favor.

During Zong-mi's period of residence in the imperial capital of Chang-an, he made the acquaintance of several notable officials. He had an audience with the emperor, who bestowed the purple robe upon him, and was well on his way to becoming one of the most prominent Buddhist monks of his era. His initial success in the imperial capital may largely be attributed to his special relationship with Cheng-guan, who was undoubtedly the most influential Buddhist figure of his time. Yet while Cheng-guan may have provided the spark to ignite Zong-mi's career, it was Zong-mi himself who engineered and achieved his subsequent success, and perhaps unwittingly contributed to his ultimate decline.

This period of residence in the capital "must have altered his sense of mission, for the character of his writings change[d]."[73] Achieving imperial recognition, encountering high-ranking officials, and receiving prestigious titles had thrust him into a new role. He was certainly not an obscure monk anymore. As a disciple of Cheng-guan and recipient of the purple robe, Zong-mi had the opportunity to circulate his teachings, as a writer and lecturer, to a much wider audience. Although some have doubted his motives, it is clear that Zong-mi's compositions before his residence in Chang-an are aimed at a different readership than many of those written after this period. Up to this time, he had primarily focussed on exegetical works of a very scholarly nature, such as the commentary on the *Yuan-jue jing*, and the commentary on the *Jin-gang bo-ruo jing*. Reading and

[73]*TMSB* 72.

understanding these works required a solid background in Buddhist studies which invariably limited their appeal. Later works of Zong-mi are characterized by their appeal to a wider readership and were often written in response to specific requests for information.[74] This is not to say that their level of scholarship was diminished, but that Zong-mi was changing his style to spread the *dharma* according to what he perceived to be the needs of the times.

Apparently not everybody was convinced that Zong-mi had such noble intentions. Pei Xiu wrote in his epitaph:

> The critics believe that Master Mi did not maintain Chan practice, but widely lectured upon the *sutras* and *sastras*. He roamed through famous towns and great cities and considered establishing [Buddhism] to be his responsibility. Then was he just a slave of a good reputation? Could it possibly be that he had not yet forgotten fame and profit? Alas! How could the critics understand the inclinations of the great Way?[75]

Pei's spirited defense of Zong-mi's motives and purpose on the master's stele inscription indicate that these were indeed questions asked by "critics" of the day.

Several of Zong-mi's major works were written following his visit to Chang-an. These are his *Chan Preface* (the only surviving segment of his *Collected Writings on the Source of Chan*), *Chan Chart (Zhong-hua chuan-xin-di chan-men shi-zi cheng-xi tu)* 中華傳心地禪門

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[74]Zong-mi's *Reply to the Questions of Shi Shan-ren* is an example.

[75]*TW* 2b:9-3a:2.

師資承襲図, and the famous *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity (Yuan-ren lun)* 原人論. He also wrote essays in response to personal requests, mostly from various court officials, such as Xiao Mian 蕭俛 (d.837), Wen Zao 温造 (767-836), Shi Shan-ren 史山人, and of course, Pei Xiu.[76]

Zong-mi's closest friend and most ardent admirer was Pei Xiu (787?-860), whose records of their friendship and collaboration constitute the core of our biographical information. A devout Buddhist, he was a lay disciple and devoted follower of Zong-mi's teachings. Additionally, he was also a high-ranking government official from an eminent line of scholar-officials.

Pei Xiu was born in He-nei to a Buddhist family from whom he received a religious upbringing as well as a thorough grounding in the Chinese classics. He and his two brothers all succeeded in the imperial examinations, with Pei Xiu obtaining the *jin-shi* degree sometime between 821-824. His first posts were within the Secretariat in Chang-an, from which he advanced to the position of investigating censor at the time he met Zong-mi. Pei Xiu then advanced through the Secretariat in Chang-an until the reign of Wu-zong (r.841-846), when he was transferred to the provinces. The Emperor Wu-zong was rabidly anti-Buddhist and is notorious for instigating the persecutions of 845, during which thousands of monasteries were destroyed and monks and nuns were forcibly

[76]No dates are available for Shi Shan-ren.

laicized. With such tendencies, it is not surprising that an official as sympathetic to Buddhism as Pei Xiu should have been transferred out of the capital. With the ascension of Xuan-zong (r.847-860), he was recalled to the capital and appointed vice-director of the Ministry of Revenue. From this position he gradually ascended in rank to grand councilor, which he then held for five years.

Zong-mi and Pei Xiu enjoyed a mutually beneficial and collaborative relationship, whereby the learned monk served as the minister's spiritual mentor, and the minister was able to enhance the monk's career and secure his reputation. Pei Xiu often sought out the acquaintance of notable Buddhist monks to engage them in discussions of the *dharma*. He was extremely well-versed in Buddhist literature and doctrine and was able to understand and appreciate the work of such a brilliant monk as Zong-mi. The *Song gao-seng zhuan* describes their affiliation:

> Those whom Mi knew well were numerous, but none were as profound as the high level prime minister. It was a case of two people of the same spirit coming together....When one looks at the effect of his influence, there was never any difference. The shadow waited for the form to arise, and the echo followed the sound. There was Master Zong-mi. If there was Master Mi, then there was Master Prime Minister Pei. If not for Prime Minister Pei, how would we be able to know Master Mi? They continue [each other's work] like a never-ending circle.[77]

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[77]*SGSZ* 5b:1-2, 6-8.

Pei Xiu wrote prefaces for several of his works, such as the *Chan Preface.* Zong-mi also wrote a preface for one of Pei Xiu's Buddhist essays, among other works either inspired by or dedicated to Pei Xiu.[78] It was in response to his inquiries regarding the Chan School that Zong-mi wrote his celebrated *Chan Chart*, which was originally entitled *Pei Xiu Shi Yi Wen.*[79]

We are indebted to Pei Xiu for his epitaph on Zong-mi. As a contemporary and close friend of Zong-mi, he provided precious first-hand information and insight into Zong-mi's life, yet as a friend, he apparently also felt certain obligations.

VI. The Sweet Dew Fell in the Evening Hours.

Zong-mi's life entered a new phase with his involvement in the failed coup of the Sweet Dew Incident (835). The full scope of his role is not fully understood and this secret most probably died with him. What we do know is that in the eyes of the reconstructed court he was disgraced. Following this incident he went into virtual seclusion at his monastery, where he kept quiet and maintained a low profile. We know little of his activities in these last years of his life.

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[78]*Quan fa pu ti xin wen xu.*

[79]There is some controversy involving discrepancies between the (original) title of the *Chan Chart* and the actual sequence of Pei Xiu's posts. Jan Yun-hua asserts that the title of the *Chan Chart* was most likely in error. (*TMSB* 74)

While the *Song gao-seng zhuan* records Zong-mi's involvement in the Sweet Dew Incident (835), this episode is rather conspicuously absent from Pei Xiu's epitaph. The *Song gao-seng zhuan's* narrative opens with a dramatic and vivid description of the prevailing mood at court:

> From the Chang-qing and Yuan-he periods on, the eunuchs who had achieved distinction and held power were ablaze with rebellion. The inner and outer courts feared and suspected each other and the emperor was in danger.[80]

It would be difficult to overestimate the power and influence of the eunuchs in this period. Ever since the An Lu-shan Rebellion had shaken the Tang ruling house to its foundations, the eunuchs had profited from the general instability as they entrenched themselves in powerful positions and gained military strength through control of the palace armies.

The eunuchs' original function was to act as domestic servants in the inner quarters of the court, and until the time of Xuan-zong (r.712-756) their role was still confined to serving as personal attendants and managing the affairs of the inner palace and women's quarters.[81] However, dangerous precedents were set by the emperors Xuan-zong 玄宗 (r.712-756) and Dai-zong 代宗 (r.762-

[80]*SGSZ* 3a:4-5.

[81]Preston 20-21.

779).[82] In the early Tang dynasty, Emperor Tai-zong 太宗 (r.626-649) had decreed that eunuchs should forever be restricted to commoner status and that they should never hold high appointments in officialdom, explicitly defined as third rank or higher.[83] These precautions were ignored when Xuan-zong promoted the eunuch Gao Li-shi 高力士 (d.762) to third rank, thereby opening the door of high appointments and nobility to the court eunuchs. With the establishment of the Shu-mi Council 樞密院 of advisors by Dai-zong and his appointment of a eunuch as leader of the Shen-ce Army 神策軍, the eunuchs became firmly entrenched in court politics. These two institutions became the stronghold of the eunuchs and the foundation of their power during the late Tang.

> In Wen-[zong]'s reign [r.827-840], however, the deliberation process and regular functions of the court were made incompetent and confused by the conspicuous presence of eunuch interference in the Inner Court and factional strife in the Outer....[They were] threatening to the survival of the political system and, in effect, the dynasty itself.[84]

By this time, the eunuchs were the dominant force in the court and controlled all of the palace armies. As further pointed out by Jennifer Wei-yen Jay Preston, the full extent of eunuch power is

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[82]Alternate dates of ascension are 713 C.E. for Xuan-zong and 763 C.E. for Dai-zong.

[83]Dalby 571.

[84]Preston 20.

evident in their influence on the imperial succession.[85] Although eunuch interference was quietly suspected in Xuan-zong's ascension, by the time of Shun-zong 順宗 (r.805) the eunuchs had brazenly forced the emperor to abdicate in favor of his son, Xian-zong 憲宗 (r.805-820), whom they later assassinated. All subsequent Tang emperors, except Jing-zong 敬宗 (r.824-827), were enthroned by eunuchs, often following bitter infighting among competing factions.[86]

This was no less true in the ascension of Wen-Zong, who was seventeen years of age when he was set on the throne by the faction led by Wang Shou-cheng (d.835). Wen-zong's reign has endured many different characterizations by historians, who have based their judgements primarily upon the pivotal role that the Sweet Dew Incident played in Wen-zong's regency. The tone of his reign at the time of commencement differed markedly from that of its conclusion. Wen-zong began with utter seriousness in his mission to rectify the mistakes of his predecessors and re-establish the authority of the central government, yet he ended in ignominious defeat at the hands of the eunuchs—indulging in the same excesses which earlier emperors had striven to eliminate.

Early on, Wen-zong embarked on several missions to try to wrest actual power away from the eunuchs and restore it to the

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[85] *Ibid.*, 25.

[86] Jing-zong's sudden death in 827 is widely believed to have been engineered by the same eunuchs who had killed Xian-zong, notably Chen Hong-zhi and Wang Shou-cheng (*Ibid.*, 26).

regular bureaucracy. In the Liu Fen Incident 劉賁 (828),[87] the emperor administered an examination soliciting governing principles for his reign. A candidate named Liu Fen responded with a brilliant reply denouncing the eunuchs for their stranglehold on the court, and entreated the emperor to tackle this problem by returning authority to the ministers and generals. Although Liu Fen's response was widely acclaimed as the most outstanding, it did not pass due to his sharp criticism of the eunuchs. This fact, together with the subsequent blow to his career, indicated that the imperial bureaucracy was not yet willing or ready to risk an open confrontation with the eunuchs.

Wen-zong could have overruled the examiners but did not. Instead, in 830 the emperor embarked on a plan with his trusted chief minister, Song Shen-xi (d.833), to remove the eunuchs from power. Song was a Han-lin academician promoted by the emperor for the express purpose of devising anti-eunuch strategies, and he was not involved with the factional rivalry so prevalent at court. Song, however, leaked the plans which eventually reached Wang Shou-cheng 王守澄 and the notorious physician, Zheng Zhu 鄭注 (d.835). Wang and Zheng responded by fabricating charges that Song was plotting to overthrow Wen-zong and enthrone his brother. In the face of these accusations made by the powerful eunuch Wang, the emperor did not come to his minister's aid. Few efforts were

[87]For a complete description, please refer to Preston 27-29, or Waley 172, who spells the name as "Liu Pen."

made to exonerate Song—he was tried, found guilty, and sent into exile, where he died shortly thereafter.

Wen-zong's third attempt to eradicate the eunuch menace came to yet another tragic end. Previously, the emperor had managed to keep his role a secret when the plans failed. With the spectacular failure of the Sweet Dew Incident, however, the full range of his participation became apparent. Emperor Wen-zong's chief architect for this operation was Li Xun, who also happened to be a close friend of Zong-mi.

Li Xun obtained the *jin-shi* degree in 823. Two years later, he became involved in a factional dispute in which he tried to falsely implicate another man for attempted murder.[88] He was discovered and subsequently stripped of his title and sent into exile. After Wen-zong ascended the throne in 827, Li Xun was pardoned. From 832-834 he resided in Luo-yang to observe the mourning period for his mother, and it is likely that it was during this time that he made connections with the other men who would later prove to be key figures in the plot against the eunuchs.[89] The four men who formed the core group of conspirators, Li Xun, Shu Yuan-yu 舒元輿 (780?-835), Wang Yai 王涯 (*jin-shi* 792-835), and Jia Su 賈 (*jin-shi* 803-835) held a meeting near Luo-yang in 833. This coincides with both the time that Zong-mi spent in Luo-yang (832-833) and Bo Ju-yi's 白居易 (772-846) term as mayor of the city.

[88]Preston 51.

[89]Preston 52.

The celebrated poet Bo Ju-yi was a close friend of Zong-mi and Shu Yuan-yu as well as an acquaintance of Li Xun. A devout Buddhist, he was friendly with many of the notable monks of the time. Bo had moved up through the official ranks and was residing in Chang-an as president of the palace library during the time that Zong-mi was in Chang-an (828-829). During his time at the court, he became acutely aware of the dangerous tangle of court intrigue and palace politics.

Bo sought to avoid becoming ensnared in the factional rivalry that plagued the court in those times and cited the pretext of poor health in order to leave his position at court and return to Luo-yang in 829. Luo-yang, however, turned out to be the meeting-place of choice for the architects of the Sweet Dew Plot. It seems likely that his close connections with Li Xun, Shu Yuan-yi, and Jia Su would have given him inside knowledge of the plot.[90] Although Bo had earlier expressed his dislike of eunuchs, he apparently wished to remain uninvolved and even resigned from his position as mayor of Luo-yang. The meetings in Luo-yang were such a well-kept secret that when the massacres began after the failure of the plot, Luo-yang and Bo Ju-yi were spared. Many of Bo's poems written after this date bear the theme of "Prudence Rewarded," in which he expresses his immense relief in having chosen the proper path of non-involvement.[91]

[90]Preston 55.

[91]Waley 187-189.

Li Xun re-entered Chang-an in 834 by cultivating political connections, particularly through Zheng Zhu, which gave him access to Wang Shou-cheng and subsequently Wen-zong. Li Xun recruited Zheng Zhu and obtained the confidence of Wang Shou-cheng. He even obtained an audience with the emperor, who was so impressed that he had Li Xun appointed to the Han-lin Academy, which then became the operating base for the Sweet Dew Plot. From his position as a Han-lin scholar, Li Xun proceeded to progressively eliminate the leading eunuchs as well as the faction leaders. As the murders and banishments of the eunuchs and faction members continued, Li Xun filled the official openings with his own cohorts until his was the most powerful faction at court. After the emperor appointed him chief minister 835, Li Xun also had Wang Shou-cheng murdered. Now he was ready for the final blow against the eunuchs--eliminating Qiu Shou-liang (781-843) and Yu Heng-zhi (d.u.), commanders of the Shen-ce armies. Since the Palace Armies were the eunuchs' power base, it was necessary to separate them from the armies in order to eradicate their influence. To do so would require military force. Li Xun's faction devised the Sweet Dew Plot in order to massacre the eunuchs—by utilizing the armies of the outer court, and providing backup systems outside of Chang-an in Feng-xiang and other regions.

On the morning of December 14, 835, the court gathered before the emperor, where it was announced that sweet dew, an auspicious

omen, had fallen on a pomegranate tree in the palace courtyard.[92] Emperor Wen-zong then ordered Qiu Shou-liang, Yu Heng-zhi, and the other eunuchs to go and inspect this phenomenon. As the eunuchs arrived at the appointed place, a gust of wind blew aside a flap in the tent where the soldiers of the Li Xun faction were hiding. The eunuchs immediately recognized the plot and raced back inside the palace where they abducted the emperor and took him to the inner quarters away from Li Xun and the others. The emperor realized that he was helpless and completely at the mercy of the eunuchs, who began issuing orders in his name. Qiu Shou-liang and Yu Heng-zhi engaged the Shen-ce armies and promptly began slaughtering anyone and everyone they suspected of being connected with the plot. Li Xun's outside forces only managed to kill about fifty eunuchs, whereas the Shen-ce armies are believed to have killed 1600 people in Chang-an alone.[93] The mass killings of clan members, associates, acquaintances, and those with no involvement whatsoever, plus the enslavement of women and slaves by the state brought the total number of deaths at the hands of the eunuchs to approximately 3,000. The chaos in the capital continued until an imperial edict was issued in 836 to put a halt to the madness.

The Shen-ce armies advanced to Feng-xiang to search out any other Sweet Dew supporters who might have fled there. Zheng Zhu

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[92]Gregory uses December 15. I am following Preston here.

[93]Death statistics are quoted from Preston 77.

and his army were part of the backup system based in Feng-xiang.[94] Li Xun managed to escape from Chang-an and fled to Zhong-nan Mountain where Zong-mi's monastery was located. He sought refuge with Zong-mi and asked to have his head shaved to disguise him as a monk. Zong-mi was willing to do so, but his disciples prevented him out of fear of eunuch retribution. Li Xun had no choice but to leave and fled to Feng-xiang. He was caught *en route* and, rather than allow himself to be tortured and sliced in two by the eunuch commanders, he had a soldier behead him promptly.[95]

For his crime of granting Li Xun temporary shelter instead of reporting him immediately, Qiu Shou-liang ordered Zong-mi arrested and brought before the army camp. Qiu informed Zong-mi of his crimes and probably intended to execute him, when Zong-mi cheerfully told him:

> I, a poor monk, knew Xun for many years, and I also knew of his rebellion, but in my master's teaching of the *dharma* it is stated that upon encountering suffering beings, one should help them without hesitation. I do not crave my own bodily life, and if I die, I would certainly do so willingly.[96]

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[94]Although the *Song gao-seng zhuan* tells us that the key members Wang Yai, Jia Su, and Shu Yuan-yi also fled to Zhong-nan, Preston's study does not support this account.

[95]Preston 77.

[96]*SGSZ* 3a:10-3b:2.

Upon hearing such a statement of selflessness in the face of almost certain death, Yu Heng-zhi intervened to praise the monk and then submitted a memorial to officially pardon Zong-mi for his crime. This statement clearly establishes that Zong-mi had prior knowledge of Li Xun's plot against the eunuchs, although to what extent is uncertain.

As previously mentioned, there is very little information available regarding Zong-mi's activities after the Sweet Dew Incident. Gregory speculates that Zong-mi composed his commentary on the *Yu-lan-pen jing* during this period while residing in Sichuan.[97] Zong-mi's Hua-yan Master, Cheng-guan, also died in 839. It is likely that this was a very depressing period for him. The court was certainly unfriendly to him, many of his friends were dead or in exile, and his mentor had died. We hear no more from him.

Gui-feng Zong-mi died in meditation posture at the Monastery of the Pagoda of the Arising of Blessings on the sixth day of the first month of the first year of Hui-chang (841). He was sixty-two and has been a monk for thirty-four years. Zong-mi left detailed instructions to his disciples as to how they should mourn him and see to his remains. Since he did not want his disciples to disrupt their meditation and study by crying and lamenting, he instructed them to ascend the mountain at each Qing-ming Festival and preach the Way for seven days. Following this, they should depart. Zong-mi had decreed that his body should be given *(dana)* to the insects and dogs

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[97] *TMSB* 89.

and that his bones should be burned and scattered.[98] He did not want his remains entombed in a *stupa*. Zong-mi further declared that "they should remain in accord with the *Vinaya* regulations. Those who oppose them are not my disciples."[99] As one of the most renowned monks of his time, Zong-mi's burial instructions were, of course, disregarded. Sixteen days after his death, monks, disciples, and lay followers escorted his body to Gui Peak, where he was cremated on the thirteenth day of the second month. Pei Xiu reported that the disciples found relics among the ashes which shone with a white light. They gathered them all together and housed them in a stone pagoda.

During the attempted restoration of Buddhism which followed the vicious persecutions carried out under Emperor Wu-zong, the new Emperor Xuan-zong (r.846-859) bestowed upon Zong-mi the posthumous title of "Meditation and Wisdom Chan Master" *(Ding-hui chan-shi)* 定慧禅師 and ordered the construction of the Blue Lotus Stupa. Pei Xiu was probably influential in obtaining these honors for Zong-mi in 853.[100] The inscription on his stele was written by Pei Xiu and carved in seal script by the noted calligrapher, Liu Gong-juan Gong-juan 柳公權 (778-865).

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[98]The *SGSZ* 3a:1 has "birds and beasts".

[99] *SGSZ* 3a:2-3. The *Tang Wen* 5a:3 is slightly different.

[100]*TMSB* 73-74.

Chapter Three

An Introduction to Zong-mi's Thought

This chapter will focus on some of the main themes in Zong-mi's work in order to provide insight into his contribution to Chinese Buddhist thought and define his place within the Hua-yan and Chan traditions. Main topics of consideration will be Zong-mi's revamping of the traditional Hua-yan *pan-jiao* 判教 system to reflect his emphasis on soteriology, his critical assessment of the Chan school as described in the *Chan Preface*, and the essay *Reply to the Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren (Da Shi Shan-ren shi-wen).* This selection of discussion topics represents a sampling of Zong-mi's writings and highlights several of his doctrinal innovations.

The first topic presented in this chapter is *pan-jiao*, which played a tremendously important role in the Sui-Tang period and in the development of Chinese Buddhism. Given the central role of *pan-jiao* in the Hua-yan tradition and Zong-mi's thought, this topic merits special attention. Zong-mi played an important role in the sinification of Buddhism through his re-working of the *pan-jiao* system according to his interpretation of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith.*[101]

[101]See Gregory's discussion of Zong-mi's contributions to the sinification of Buddhism in the *TMSB*.

Zong-mi's analysis of Chan is the subject of the second section. Zong-mi entered Buddhism through the Chan tradition, and it was from Chan that he then entered Hua-yan; he considered these two traditions to be mutually conplementary. This theme of compatibility between the exegetical and practice-oriented schools is a major theme in his writings on Chan. However, during the Tang, there were also major divisions among Chan schools which Zong-mi also addressed and sought to overcome in the *Chan Preface*.

Section Three of this chapter is devoted to a translation of Zong-mi's *Reply to the Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren*. This text is in question and answer form as a response to a set of questions submitted by Shi Shan-ren.

I. Doctrinal Classification *(pan-jiao)*

Pan-jiao is a hermeneutical tool by which early Chinese Buddhists sought to make sense of the bewildering array of *sutras* and *sastras* which they inherited from Indian Buddhism—a truly monumental task both in scope and difficulty. Complicating this picture was the fact that Buddhism was an Indian religion. This was not simply an issue for xenophobes, rather, it meant that the Chinese were valiantly attempting to understand a religion that was far removed from its original cultural and historical context. Indian texts were written for an Indian audience. Many literary devices, social values, and customs were familiar and honored institutions in Indian

society; yet when exported to China, they caused confusion or even disgust. The practice of celibacy provides a good example. Whereas celibacy was a common and accepted practice among Indian religious seekers, it was entirely abhorrent to the Chinese and ran counter to their most basic values.

These already difficult circumstances were exacerbated by the random order in which the texts arrived in China, without regard to their content, chronology, means of exposition, or attributed author. Therefore, it became necessary to organize them in some understandable fashion. "Chinese Buddhists were, as their Indian counterparts were not, called upon to make sense out of Buddhism as a totality."[102] This helps to explain why *pan-jiao* is not a major feature of Indian Buddhism, even though it had its roots in the Indian concept of *upaya (fang-bian)* 方便, or "expedient means."[103]

Pan-jiao stands in its own right as a form of Chinese Buddhist philosophy. It is an organized system designed to solve doctrinal problems and held a central place in the religious systems of many Chinese Buddhist schools, including Hua-yan. The process of organizing and classifying the various Buddhist schools, *sutras*, and philosophies is a philosophical statement in itself, for it reveals how a particular school constructed its own world view. By examining a *pan-*

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[102]*TMSB* 108.

[103]Some texts incorporating the methodology of the later Chinese *pan-jiao* are the *Mahaparinirvana-sutra*, *Lankavatara-sutra*, and *Samdhinirmocana-sutra*. Perhaps the most famous example of *upaya* comes from the *Saddarmapundarika-sutra*, or *Lotus Sutra*.

jiao system, one can learn about a school's self-image (how it viewed itself in relation to other schools), its sense of Buddhist values (which teachings it considers superior/inferior), and its philosophy.

Pan-jiao began to appear in the early fifth century during the Northern Wei period (386-534), although its exact origins remain unknown. This period corresponded to the second phase in the sinification of Buddhism, during which the Chinese attempted to understand Buddhism on its own terms, instead of trying to filter it through indigenous religious and philosophical systems.[104] One of the earliest examples of *pan-jiao* was written by Hui-guan 慧觀 (363-443) in his preface to the *Nirvana Sutra (Fo lin nie-pan ji fa zhu jing)* 佛臨涅槃記法住經, where he divided Buddhist teachings into two categories: sudden and gradual.[105] He associated the sudden teaching solely with the *Hua-yan Sutra*, while he further divided the gradual teaching into five periods.[106] Hui-guan was the first to implement a five-fold scheme and advance the concept of a separate sudden teaching. Zhan-ran 湛然 (711-782), who developed the standard Tian-tai 天台 *pan-jiao*, devised a system of five periods and eight doctrines which incorporated three different rubrics for the classification of doctrines: 1) chronological division—according to when the Buddha preached the teaching; 2) division according to method of exposition; and 3) division

[104]*TMSB* 111.

[105]Alternate date of death is 424 in *SH*.

[106]*TMSB* 111.

according to the content of the teaching. The *Hua-yan Sutra* presents an interesting case when analyzed in this manner, since it is the first and lowest chronologically yet last and highest in content.

The three possible uses for *pan-jiao* are hermeneutical, sectarian, and soteriological, all of which are implemented by Hua-yan *pan-jiao* scholars.[107] While these elements are not mutually exclusive in doctrinal classification systems, the major classification systems set forth by the three Hua-yan patriarchs, Zhi-yan, Fa-zang, and Zong-mi, each took one as their defining feature.[108] Each of these patriarchs built upon the work of his predecessors while creating classification systems which differed markedly in tone and emphasis. For this reason, the *pan-jiao* systems of each patriarch must be examined in light of the prevailing religious mood.

In the case of Zong-mi, he took an active role in confronting some of the major issues of the day, namely, the sudden-gradual and exegetical-Chan debates. His *pan-jiao* reflects his personal stand on these topics and forms a microcosm of his religious thought. In keeping with his syncretic nature, Zong-mi overhauled the tremendous *pan-jiao* system of Fa-zang to incorporate Confucianism and Daoism, de-emphasize sectarianism (by relocating the *Hua-yan Sutra*), and highlight his soteriological concerns by placing the *tathagatagarbha-*

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[107]*TMSB* 115.

[108]Cheng-guan did not establish a major system of *pan-jiao*.

doctrine on top.[109]

A. Zhi-yan's *Pan-jiao* Systems

Zhi-yan was the first Hua-yan patriarch to develop a system for classifying the Buddhist scriptures, and his effort was geared toward understanding them in light of the work of his master teacher, Du-shun. Thus, Zhi-yan's pan-jiao is strongly hermeneutical in tone and formed the basis for Fa-zang's later work. During the course of his career Zhi-yan wrote several works discussing *pan-jiao*; which are the *Da-fang-guang fo hua-yan jing sou-xuan fen-qi tong-zhi fang-gui (Sou-xuan ji)* 大方廣佛華嚴經搜玄分齊通智方軌, *Hua-yan wu-shi yao wen-da (Wu-shi yao wen-da)* 華嚴五十要問答, and *Hua-yan jing nei-zhang men deng ci kong-mu zhang (Kong-mu zhang)* 大方廣華嚴經內章門等雜孔目章.

As Gregory points out, Zhi-yan's *pan-jiao* was "presystematic" and not intended to

> organize the diverse collection of holy scripture into a harmonious and coherent framework (as Hui-kuan had done), but to make sense out of the complex assimilation of Indian Buddhist doctrines that had taken place in the Six Dynasties and to refocus them in terms of the new agenda that had been posed by Tu-shun and the "new Buddhism of the Sui and T'ang periods."[110]

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[109]Zong-mi's soteriological concerns will be discussed later in this chapter.

[110]*TMSB* 126-127.

Zhi-yan did not devise one single definitive scheme but incorporated three different formats for classifying the Buddhist teachings. From these, he devised several different doctrinal classification schemes, which are: 1) gradual, sudden, and perfect; 2) lesser vehicle, three vehicles, and one vehicle; and 3) the common and separate teachings. The first rubric was derived from Hui-guang 慧光 (468-537) and Zhi-zheng 智正 (559-639), while the second was derived from Paramartha's translation of the *Mahayanasamgraha-sastra* 大乘攝論. Zhi-yan introduced the third system in his *Sou-xuan ji*, based on his interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra*.[111] None of these was designated as a superior or standard system of classification. The five-teachings format, a characteristic feature of Hua-yan *pan-jiao*, was developed by Zhi-yan in his *Kong-mu zhang*.[112] As Gregory has illustrated in the following chart, each of these three rubrics is present in the five-teaching scheme:[113]

1. Gradual Teachings
   A. Men and Gods
      a. Men
      b. Gods
   B. Lesser Vehicle
      a. Sravakas

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[111]Affiliated with the Di-lun School.

[112]Previously, the innovation of the five-teachings format had been attributed to Du-shun in the work *Wu-jiao zhi-guan* 五教止觀, but this work is now considered a forgery. See Liu, "The *Pan-jiao* System of the Hua-yan School" 15.

[113]*TMSB* 124.

b. Pratyekabuddhas
C. Three Vehicles
a. Elementary Teaching
b. Advanced Teaching
2. Sudden Teaching
3. Perfect Teaching of the One Vehicle
A. Separate Teaching
B. Common Teaching

If we remove the first heading of "Gradual Teachings," then A, B, and C become teachings one through three, while the sudden and perfect become teachings four and five respectively. In this scheme, the lesser vehicle refers to the Hinayana and the latter three to the Mahayana. Zhi-yan's *pan-jiao* marks a definite progression in the Buddha's teachings: beginning from the least advanced (the teaching of men and gods) and moving to the most advanced (perfect teaching). This movement progresses in accordance with the spiritual abilities of the various beings from humans to bodhisattvas. The Buddha, out of his infinite compassion, taught at different levels based on what his disciples could understand. Then, as the disciples increased their understanding, they were taught more profound teachings.

Zhi-yan's theory is reflected in the category of Gradual Teachings, which were those designed for beings of inferior capacity who could not understand the truth of ultimate reality. This theory of graduated teachings is a type of *upaya* and helps to explain the related categories of sudden and perfect teachings. They are all compatible teachings and all lead to the same end, as may be seen in Zhi-yan's classification of the *Hua-yan Sutra* as both a sudden and perfect

teaching. Here the gradual teaching is comprised of the first three categories of the Teaching of Men and Gods, the Hinayana, and the Three Teachings (of the Mahayana tradition). Zhi-yan further divided the latter categories into the two subdivisions of the elementary and advanced teaching. The Hinayana teaching is inferior to the Mahayana because it only teaches that the self and material objects lack self-nature. The elementary teaching goes further to relate the teaching of emptiness which maintains that the *dharmas* which compose the self and material objects also lack a self-nature.[114] The advanced teaching of the three vehicles is the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine.

Liu and Gimello stress the influence of the old Yogacara tradition on Zhi-yan and his aversion to the new Yogacara which had gained in popularity ever since Xuan-zang returned from his journey to the west.[115] This is especially apparent in Zhi-yan's division of the three vehicles into the beginning/rudimentary and advanced/mature teaching following the introduction of Xuan-zang's new Yogacara. Zhi-yan was a highly accomplished scholar of Yogacara in the Di-lun and She-lun traditions which emphasized the *tathagatagarbha* theory. The major differences between the new and old versions of Yogacara were that of:

[114]*PSHS* 17.

[115]For a brief summary see *PSHS* 17-18. Gimello devotes Chapter Four of his dissertation to this issue, 338-414.

> [the old Yogacara] Buddhism which offers the prospect of truly universal enlightenment regardless of the particular capacities of individual beings and which portrays the sentient condition as a condition of intrinsic [B]uddhahood. Dharmapala, Hsüan-tsang, and [their] descendants...were all seen to have threatened that vision by picturing enlightenment as something to be laboriously achieved rather than as something innate, by denying to certain beings even the capacity to achieve it, and by distinguishing among the kinds of enlightenment those of differing capacities could achieve. Such views...[were] inimical to the principles of the "new Buddhism of Sui and T'ang."[116]

Thus, Zhi-yan's demotion of the new Yogacara to the elementary teaching is both a reflection of his informed opinion as a scholar and a reaction against this threat to Chinese Buddhist values.

Fa-zang describes the sudden teaching as intended for those beings of "matured faculties" for whom the Buddha "set forth fully the whole of his *dharma* in a single *dharma*-exposition. Permanence and impermanence, emptiness and non-emptiness were all completely expounded at one time without sequence."[117] Zhi-yan derives this theory from the *Hua-yan Sutra*, which he interprets as adding a distinct category above and beyond the traditional theory of three vehicles which is not accessible to the disciples, self-enlightened, or the conventional bodhisattva.[118]

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[116] *CFHB* 362.

[117] *CFHB* 371. Quoting Fa-zang's description of Hui-guang's *pan-jiao* scheme.

[118] *CFHB* 379.

The perfect teaching is for "those of higher penetration who have partially advanced toward the Buddha-realm."[119] These beings are of the highest spiritual capacity and for them, the Buddha "taught the perfect and most arcane sovereign *dharma* of the Tathagata's unimpeded liberation, the ocean of ultimate fruit."[120] Zhi-yan unites the two categories of "perfect" and "one" as the Perfect Teaching of the One Vehicle and bases it on a passage from Paramartha's version of the *Mahayanasamgraha-sastra (Da-sheng she lun)* 大乘攝論 which describes the lesser, three, and one vehicles.[121] Zhi-yan also identifies the sudden teaching with the one vehicle. He describes their relationship as being "indeterminate" and writes that sometimes they are not distinct, while at other times they are as distinct from another as insight is to doctrine, or as if one is superficial and the other is profound.[122]

Another feature of the perfect teaching of the one vehicle is that it subsumes the two subcategories of the common and separate teachings, which are identified with the *Hua-yan Sutra* and *Lotus Sutra* respectively. Zhi-yan again sees the basis of this in the *Lotus*

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[119]*CFHB* 371. Quoting Fa-zang's description of Hui-guang's *pan-jiao* scheme.

[120]*CFHB* 371.

[121]Gimello notes that this passage derives from the *Mahayanasamgrahabhasya* instead of the *Mahayanasamgraha-sastra* *CFHB* 372). Gregory follows Gimello here.

[122]*CFHB* 379; Gimello also adds a note that Zhi-yan, in his later works, clarifies the relationship between the sudden teaching and the perfect teaching of the one vehicle.

Sutra in the parable of the burning house.[123] In this parable, a father realizes that his house is burning while his three young sons are still inside. In order to get them to leave the burning building, he entices them with gifts. He offers each boy a toy to please him; these are a goat-drawn, deer-drawn, and ox-drawn carriage. The children at last come out and request their promised gifts. The father instead gives them each a great jewelled carriage drawn by a white ox. The three carriages of course represent the three vehicles and the superior ox-drawn cart represents the one vehicle. In this scenario, the superior cart also represents the separate teaching, since the one cart is separate from and superior to the other three, as is the *Hua-yan Sutra.* In the actual *pan-jiao* system, the separate teaching embodies the three teachings as well as the Hinayana; thus, it is independent of the others yet at the same time identical to them. Gregory describes it as follows:

> Chih-yen's discussion suggests that, from the point of view of the one vehicle, the difference among the various vehicles is only provisional. It is only from the perspective of the three vehicles that the difference seems to be real. The one vehicle must therefore be established as a separate teaching in order for its inclusive function as the common teaching to be realized. The common teaching thus represents the expedient aspect of the one vehicle, and the separate teaching, its ultimate aspect.[124]

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[123]Hurvitz, *Scripture*, 58-60.

[124]*TMSB* 125.

As the parable of the burning house makes clear, the three carriages are all a form of *upaya*. Applying this metaphor to the classification scheme, then the separate teaching (i.e., *Hua-yan Sutra*) is the ultimate teaching, while the others are all expedients designed to lead those beings of inferior capacity to this ultimate teaching in accordance with their spiritual abilities. The expedients derive from and lead towards the separate teaching of the perfect teaching of the one vehicle.

In summarizing the above description, Zhi-yan's motivation for creating his *pan-jiao* was not to create a definitive masterpiece, but to provide a hermeneutical tool for making sense of the wide variety of Buddhist doctrine and to reconcile it with the work of his master, Du-shun. Zhi-yan's development of the first Hua-yan doctrinal classification system illustrates a progression in the Buddha's teaching from rudimentary teachings suitable for beings of inferior spiritual capacity to the ultimate teaching of Buddhism which perfectly reveals ultimate reality. Zhi-yan highlights the differences between the gradual teachings, which are really only a form of *upaya*, and the sudden and perfect teachings. An important innovation of Zhi-yan was his division of the three teachings into the two subcategories of elementary and advanced as a response to the influx of the new Yogacara texts brought by Xuan-zang from India. He utilized three different rubrics to create his various permutations on the *pan-jiao* theme, yet he never advocated any specific scheme as "correct" or superior to any other. This is an important consideration when examining Fa-zang's "definitive" work on *pan-jiao*.

B. Fa-zang's *Pan-jiao* System

Fa-zang, the third patriarch, is considered by many scholars to be the true founder of the Hua-yan School because of his work in systematizing Hua-yan doctrines. A prolific author, Fa-zang's primary tool in this regard was *pan-jiao*. He laid out his doctrinal classification system in the *Hua-yan yi-sheng jiao yi fen-qi zhang (Wu-jiao zhang)* 華嚴一乘教義分齊章, which is often cited to represent the Hua-yan school as a whole. Although Fa-zang was a disciple of Zhi-yan and claims to base his own scheme upon that of his teacher, there are many fundamental differences between the two.

One fundamental difference is the role that *pan-jiao* played in their thought. For Fa-zang, this is a central component in the development of his philosophy, largely because of the prominence with which he invests the *Hua-yan Sutra*. In his system, the *Hua-yan Sutra* becomes the sole bearer of the title of perfect teaching. Whereas Zhi-yan devised several different schemes without promoting any specific one, Fa-zang created one definitive doctrinal classification system in which he placed his own lineage squarely on top. For this reason, his system carries a very sectarian tone.[125]

Fa-zang borrowed the general terminology and arrangement of his *pan-jiao* from Zhi-yan's *Kong-mu zhang* to create his fixed five-fold

[125]Fa-zang's motives have been called into question by several scholars, most notably Stanley Weinstein, who suggests that Fa-zang's strong assertion of the supremacy of the *Hua-yan Sutra* may have been stimulated by his desire to attract imperial patronage from the Empress Wu Ze-tian. Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage", 297-306.

system of

1. Hinayana
2. Elementary Mahayana
3. Advanced Mahayana
4. Sudden
5. Perfect

This general outline is similar to Zhi-yan's, but there are some important changes, notably the absence of the teaching of men and gods and the splitting of the elementary and advanced Mahayana into two distinct categories. Fa-zang made additional changes which are not visible in this rough outline. As stated above, he identified the perfect teaching solely with the *Hua-yan Sutra*, thereby altering Zhi-yan's subcategories of common and separate. These subcategories were not eliminated but instead were reassigned—the separate teaching was identified with the perfect, and the common teachings were incorporated into the advanced Mahayana. Such an organization clearly established the separate teaching as superior to the common on the basis of the distinct character of the perfect teaching/*Hua-yan Sutra*, in opposition to Zhi-yan's view that the separate and common were two components of the perfect teaching. Instead, Fa-zang considered the common and separate to be two "qualitatively different orders of teaching," since the common teaching is only a form of expedient means *(upaya)*.[126]

Fa-zang devoted considerable space in the *Wu-jiao zhang* to

[126] *TMSB* 129.

establishing the status of the *Hua-yan Sutra* as a unique teaching, and he emphasized the circumstances under which the Buddha preached it. The *Hua-yan Sutra*, as the very first preaching of the Buddha while he was still deep in the *samadhi (san-mei-di)* 三昧地 of oceanic reflection under the *bodhi* 菩提 tree, contains the pure essence of the Buddha's enlightenment experience.[127] Since the *Hua-yan Sutra* is therefore the only *sutra* taught while the Buddha was still in *samadhi*, it is the only scripture which reveals the true nature of reality and the interrelationship of all phenomena *(shi-shi-wu-ai)* 事事無礙. This vision of the harmonious interpenetration of all phenomena represented for Fa-zang the pinnacle of Buddhist philosophy and the Buddhist ideal of the "middle way."[128] As such, any teaching which fell short of this ideal was therefore considered an inferior and incomplete teaching.

The implication of this for the Hua-yan school is that the Hua-yan tradition contains the pure and complete teaching of the Buddha, while all other traditions contain only an adapted or incomplete teaching. This is the basis upon which Fa-zang placed the *Hua-yan Sutra* atop all others and drew a sharp distinction between the separate and common teachings.

Additionally, Fa-zang no longer associated the *Hua-yan Sutra*

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[127]The *samadhi* of oceanic reflection is a metaphor for the Buddha's "enlightened vision in which the harmonious interrelationship of all phenomena in the entire universe simultaneously appeared as if reflected on the surface of a vast, tranquil ocean."

[128]*PSHS* 40-47.

with the sudden teaching but instead tied it to the advanced teaching of the Mahayana. According to Fa-zang, the sudden teaching is composed of two parts: its doctrinal content and its practical application. If analyzed according to content, it is identical to the advanced teaching, yet it differs profoundly in its practical application. Fa-zang takes his model for the sudden teaching from the silence of Vimalakirti[129] *(Wei-mo-jie)* 維摩詰 and the Suchness which transcends words as explained in the *Awakening of Faith.*[130] Vimalakirti requested all of the bodhisattvas assembled before Mañjusri, the Buddha of Wisdom, to describe how one can "enter the Dharma-gate of non-duality." They each made a statement about how the truth of non-duality overcomes dualism, and cited specific examples, such as *samsara* and *nirvana*. After each had spoken, they asked Mañjusri to reveal his understanding of this *dharma*. Mañjusri replied, "According to my understanding, to have no word, no speech, no indication and no cognition, departing away from all questions and answers is to enter the *Dharma*-gate of non-duality."[131] Then he asked the lay follower, Vimalakirti, to reveal his understanding. Vimalakirti responded with silence, for which Mañjusri praised him, saying, "Not to have even words or letters, this is truly entering the

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[129]This scene occurs in the ninth chapter of Kumarajiva's translation of the *Vimalakirti-sutra*. I am summarizing Garma Chang's translation, p.96-97.

[130]This is discussed in the *Awakening of Faith* as translated by Hakeda on p.32-34.

[131]Chang 97.

Dharma-gate of non-duality!"[132] Although each expressed the truth, only Vimalakirti surpassed the dualistic nature of speech by expressing the truth through silence.

The *Awakening of Faith* also makes a similar point when it says

> all things from the beginning transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are, in the final analysis, undifferentiated, free from alteration, and indestructible. They are only of the One Mind; hence the name Suchness. All explanations by words are provisional and without validity, for they are all merely used in accordance with illusions and are incapable [of denoting Suchness]...It should be understood that all things are incapable of being verbally explained or thought of; hence, the name Suchness.[133]

The *Awakening of Faith* then goes on to describe the two aspects of Suchness as predicated in words. The first is that Suchness is truly empty and can reveal what is real, and the second is that it is truly non-empty, because "its essence itself is endowed with undefiled and excellent qualities."[134] Fa-zang interprets this passage to refer to the advanced and elementary teachings of the Mahayana, respectively.

The following is a revised outline of Fa-zang's *pan-jiao* system with the corresponding schools:

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[132]Chang 97.

[133]Hakeda 33.

[134]Hakeda 34.

1.	Hinayana	
2.	Elementary Mahayana	-->Madyamaka/Fa-xiang
3.	Advanced Mahayana	-->*Tathagatagarbha* Doctrine *(Awakening of Faith)*
4.	Sudden Teaching	-->*Vimalakirti-sutra*
5.	Perfect Teaching	-->*Hua-yan Sutra*

As may be seen above, Fa-zang also reorganized the *pan-jiao* of Zhi-yan in terms of how he classified the various traditions of his day. After eliminating the teaching of men and gods from his system, the Hinayana was placed on the bottom of the list. Next, he relegated the new Yogacara of Xuan-zang to a separate and lower category than before. The perfect and sudden teachings were redefined as described above, while the *Hua-yan Sutra* alone occupied this exalted position. The most problematic aspect of this new doctrinal classification system is the category of the sudden teaching, which later became the focus of debate among later Hua-yan scholars.

Fa-zang's disciple Hui-yuan sharply criticized his teacher's inclusion of a separate category for the sudden teaching on two grounds.[135] His first point was that to call something a "teaching" requires a means to express that teaching. Since the sudden teaching abandons all forms of language, it is unable to be expressed and therefore does not qualify as a teaching. His second argument was methodological. Fa-zang's apparent organizational principle was based

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[135]Gregory summarizes the arguments of Hui-yuan and Cheng-guan on pages 142-146 of *TMSB*. My information is taken from this source. Liu also presents these arguments in (*PSHS* 135).

upon the **content** of the teachings, rather than on their method of exposition; whereas Sudden refers to the method of presenting the very same *dharma* as what is contained in the advanced teaching. From the point of view of a content-based classification system then, this separate category for the sudden teaching is redundant. Hui-yuan's analysis suggests that Fa-zang was mingling his categories instead of clearly diferentiating between content-based evaluations and method-based evaluations of the Buddha's teachings.

Cheng-guan pounced upon Hui-yuan for this criticism and sharply rebuked Hui-guan for his deficiency in comprehending the nature of meditative practice. Scholars have differing opinions on the quality of and motivation behind Cheng-guan's attack on Hui-yuan's criticism of the sudden teaching as a separate category. Gregory asserts that Cheng-guan's "rather lame response" to Hui-yuan's remarks was based upon his identification of the sudden teaching with the Chan School and his personal affiliation with various Chan lineages.[136] Cheng-guan's personal connection with the Chan School is the basis for his criticism of Hui-yuan. Cheng-guan identified the sudden teaching with the Chan tradition and, since he was connected with the tradition, was strongly offended by Hui-yuan's proposal that the sudden teaching be omitted from Fa-zang's system.

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[136]*TMSB* 145.

C. Zong-mi's *Pan-jiao* System

The guiding principle behind Zong-mi's classification system, and indeed behind his overall religious outlook, is his understanding of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine as set forth in the *Awakening of Faith.* Although he pledged himself to the explication of the *Scripture of Complete Enlightenment*, his pledge was also based on his belief that this text was a vehicle for the fulfilment of this *tathagatagarbha* doctrine. The *Awakening of Faith* was traditionally attributed to Asvaghosha, who is believed to have written the Sanskrit version which was then translated into Chinese by Paramartha in 550.[137] However, many modern scholars now doubt the authenticity of this account and consider the text to be a Chinese composition.

The *Awakening of Faith* is a Mahayana text written in extremely concise language. Due to the brevity of its style, the author has left many questions unanswered regarding the intent of this work. The *Awakening* is most notable for its development of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine, and this is the context in which Zong-mi interprets the text.

Chang defines the *tathagatagarbha* as "[t]he Buddha nature that is within every man."[138] Other definitions are the "womb of Buddhahood" or "seeds of Buddhahood," all of which refer to the

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[137]Hakeda 3.

[138]Chang 261.

potentiality of every sentient being to attain Buddhahood.[139] The reason why all beings are not complete Buddhas is because this potentiality is obscured by defilements and deluded thinking; thus, the aim of Buddhist practice is to awaken all sentient beings to the realization of this inherent capacity and to cultivate the seeds of enlightenment. Zong-mi describes the *tathagatagarbha* in his *Chan Preface*:

> If one honestly discusses fundamental nature,[140] since there is neither true nor false, neither disavowal nor unity, neither *samadhi* nor chaos, [then] who speaks of Chan? Moreover, this true nature is not only the source of the Chan school but is also the source of the myriad *dharmas*. Therefore, it is called the *Dharma*-nature, which is also the source of living beings' confusion and awakening. Therefore, it is called the *Tathagatagarbha-alayavijnana*[141]...which is also the source of all Buddhas' myriad virtues. Therefore it is called Buddha-nature..., which is also the source of the myriad practices of the Bodhisattva. Therefore, it is called Mind.[142]

The *Awakening of Faith* divides the "One Mind" into two aspects. "One is the aspect of Mind in terms of the Absolute (*tathata,* Suchness), and the other is the aspect of Mind in terms of phenomena *(samsara).*

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[139]Some even extend this capacity to sentient beings and non-sentient beings.

[140]Speaking from the standpoint of absolute truth (Broughton 88).

[141]The "womb of the Tathagata", and the "storehouse of all knowledge".

[142]*Jing-de* 306a: 19-23.

Each of these two aspects embraces all states of existence."[143] The Absolute is the eternal, undefiled, unborn essence which is beyond all verbal description and conception; even the very term "Suchness is, so to speak, the limit of verbalization wherein a word is used to put an end to words."[144] The actual term Suchness is in itself incapable of denoting the actuality of Suchness and is merely an expedient. For this reason, many Buddhists have resorted to using negative imagery when speaking of the nature of the Absolute. Believing that an affirmative description is inherently false, they describe the Absolute in terms of what it is not. Zong-mi, however, places a high value on affirmative descriptions of the Absolute.

Suchness has two further aspects when predicated in words. "One is that it is truly empty *(sunya)*, for this aspect can, in the final sense, reveal what is real. The other is that it is truly non-empty *(a-sunya)*, since its essence itself is endowed with undefiled and excellent qualities." The description of the Absolute as empty has unfortunately often led to the mistaken perception that it is a great void, a bottomless pit, or even a black hole. However, this is an incorrect view, for the empty aspect of the Absolute according to the *Awakening of Faith* refers to its lack of defilements and illusions.

> It should be understood that the essential nature of Suchness is neither with marks nor without marks; neither not with marks nor not without marks nor is it both with

[143]Hakeda 31.

[144]Hakeda 33.

> and without marks simultaneously; it is neither with a single mark nor with different marks; neither not with a single mark nor not with different marks; nor is it both with a single and with different marks simultaneously.[145]

The above passage is intended to demonstrate the absurdity of trying to attach specific characteristics to the Absolute.

The second aspect of the Absolute is truly non-empty. "Since... the true Mind is eternal, permanent, immutable, pure, and self-sufficient; therefore, it is called 'non-empty'."[146] The attributes assigned to this aspect are all described in positive and affirmative terms revealing what the Absolute is, as opposed to describing what it is not.

While Zong-mi did not attach specific characteristics, he did emphasize the importance of speaking of the Absolute in affirmative terms, as is evident in his ranking of the Three Types of Teaching. In this scheme, Zong-mi ranked the esoteric and direct teachings, and he positioned the explicitly revealed teachings higher than the ones which possess "hidden intent." He also attached particular importance to the use of what Gregory refers to as "revelatory language," that is, language which is designed to evoke the true essence of the ultimate teaching.[147]

The word which Zong-mi employed to refer to the Absolute is

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[145]Hakeda 34-35.

[146]Hakeda 35.

[147]Gregory 214.

"awareness" or "knowing."[148] He explains this point in the *Chan Preface* when he writes:

> The word "Knowing" here is not realization-knowing. The idea is that the True-nature is different from the sky or a tree or a stone and so we say it is Knowing. [Knowing] is not like the perceptions which discriminate objects. It is not like the Knowing which illuminates the substance and comprehends. It is just *tathata* which is intrinsically Knowing.[149]

The above elements derived from the *Awakening of Faith*, particularly the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine, formed the basis of Zong-mi's thought and his particular contribution to Chinese Buddhist thought. Zong-mi's *pan-jiao* was an articulation of a broad ontological framework which he developed in his *Commentary on the Scripture of Complete Enlightenment*. This framework constitutes a "five-stage model of phenomenal evolution" based on his understanding of the *Awakening* and forms the underlying principle of the "cosmogonic map" presented in the *Chan Preface*.[150] As Gregory has convincingly argued in *TMSB*, this "cosmogonic map for Buddhist practice" is the cornerstone of Zong-mi's philosophy and his "revision of Hua-yen doctrine can be best understood as part of his attempt to articulate the

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[148]Gregory translates this as "awareness," while Broughton uses "knowing." See Gregory's "Tsung-mi and the Single Word 'Awareness' (chih)."

[149]Broughton 192.

[150]"Five-stage theory of phenomenal evolution" is Gregory's title for this work.

ontological basis and philosophical rationale for Ch'an practice."[151]

This five-stage model describes how the world of suffering, defilements, and delusion is created from the Mind-ground of beings who are intrinsically awakened and ultimately identical to the Buddha. The model reads as follows:

First Stage:	One Mind *(tathagatagarbha)*
Second Stage:	Two Aspects of the One Mind
Third Stage:	Two Modes of the *Alayavijñana*
Fourth Stage:	Three Subtle Phenomenal Appearances
Fifth Stage:	Six Coarse Phenomenal Appearances

The first stage corresponds to the *tathagatagarbha* as discussed in the *Awakening*. Its two aspects, the Mind in terms of the Absolute (Suchness) and the Mind in terms of Phenomena *(alayavijñana)*, form the second stage. The *alayavijñana* in turn divides into two aspects, Original Enlightenment and the Process of Actualization of Enlightenment. The nonenlightened mind produces the Three Subtle Phenomenal appearances and the Six Coarse Phenomenal Appearances, corresponding to stages four and five.

The third stage, the Mind in Terms of Phenomena *(alavijñana)*, is the pivotal point in this five-stage model. It is often called the Storehouse Consciousness

in which "neither birth not death *(nirvana)*" diffuses

[151]Gregory's discussion of this major theme is presented in p.173-223 of *TMSB*. Cosmogony is here defined as "an account of the genesis of the cosmos" (175), referring to the cosmos of human beings' own construction.

> harmoniously with "birth and death *(samsara)*," yet in which both are neither identical nor different. This Consciousness has two aspects which embrace all states of existence and create all states of existence. They are: the aspect of enlightenment and the aspect of nonenlightenment.[152]

The dual aspects of the *alavijñana* refer to the original or intrinsic state of enlightenment possessed by all sentient beings and to to the unfulfilled potential of the same intrinsic enlightenment. That is to say, sentient beings all possess the seeds of enlightenment by virtue of the *alavijñana*, thus, enlightenment is an intrinsic state. However, due to the existence of delusion, sentient beings do not realize their potential, and are thus nonenlightened. As this applies to thoughts, "the essence of Mind is free from thoughts," and it is possible to rid oneself of such delusions by recognizing their lack of a self-nature.[153]

The unenlightened mind produces three aspects. The activity of ignorance, when suffering *(dukkha)* is produced by the agitated mind. This suffering is directly caused by, and dependent on, the agitation of the mind. Because the agitation of the mind also causes the perceiving subject (second aspect), the realm of objects appears (third aspect). Each of these appearances is dependent upon its cause and has no self-nature of its own, which is also the prescription for achieving freedom from delusion and suffering.

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[152]Hakeda 36-37.

[153]Hakeda 37-39.

The mind conditioned by the false realm of objects, gives rise to the six coarse aspects. After incorrectly perceiving the realm of objects, the mind produces the discriminating intellect (first aspect) which develops likes and dislikes. Following likes and dislikes, the mind gives rise to continuity (second aspect). The mind is now aware of pleasure and pain, which binds itself to the objects. Being bound to deluded thoughts, the mind will continue. The mind develops attachment, (third aspect) based on continuity, to what it likes. Following its attachments to objects, the mind then speculates on names and letters (fourth attachment) by analyzing words, which are empty. Next is the production of bad *karma* (fifth aspect). "Relying on names and letters, [the mind] investigates names and words and becomes attached to them and creates manifold types of evil *karma*."[154] Because of evil *karma*, the mind gives rise to suffering (sixth aspect) and is trapped in *samsara*.

Such was the background of Zong-mi's *pan-jiao*. He associated this five-stage model with its corresponding levels in his five-fold classification scheme (which will be discussed below. This was also the basis of his soteriological concern, for which he developed a model of Buddhist practice designed to release beings from suffering.

Zong-mi's doctrinal classification differed radically from the "definitive" Hua-yan *pan-jiao* systematized by Fa-zang. Zong-mi followed Chang-guan's lead in identifying the sudden teaching with the Chan school. His scheme may be outlined as follows:

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[154]Hakeda 45.

1. Teaching of Men and Gods
2. Hinayana
3. Analysis of Phenomenal appearances
4. Negation of Phenomenal appearances
5. Teaching which Reveals the Nature

Notably absent from this outline are the categories of sudden and perfect teaching. As we can see, the only category which Zong-mi retained from Fa-zang's system was that of Hinayana, and he revived Zhi-yan's category of men and gods. Aside from these, the remaining three categories are Zong-mi's own innovation designed to replace the constraints of the advanced, sudden, and perfect teachings.

Zong-mi opens his *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity* with a general critique of Confucianism and Daoism aimed at practitioners of these two indigenous Chinese religions. He goes on in the *Inquiry*, a work largely devoted to *pan-jiao*, to break new ground by including these two traditions within his classification system. Although he subordinated both Confucianism and Daoism to the teaching of karmic retribution, the most fundamental and basic teaching of Buddhism, merely including them in the discussion was a radical step and signified a willingness to acknowledge their basic worth as religious systems, however inferior to Buddhism they might be.

Zong-mi also restored the Hinayana to its position in the second category due to its slightly more advanced understanding of the Buddha's teaching. The Hinayana schools teaches the doctrine of no-self, which holds that there is no such thing as an eternal self which is

maintained through the various reincarnations. The Hinayana deconstructs the phenomenal world into its constituent parts *(dharmas)* and recognizes that the "self" is no more than a combination of the five aggregates.

The two teachings which had previously been subdivisions under Fa-zang's second category of the elementary teaching, the Fa-xiang branch of Yogacara and the Madyamaka, now occupied the third and fourth rungs in Zong-mi's system. The Fa-xiang school, as its name implies, was primarily concerned with the characteristics of *dharmas*. All *dharmas*, both pure and impure, are products of the *alayavijñana* and are therefore ultimately unreal. Its teaching of the unreality of *dharmas* therefore supersedes the Hinayana.

The Madyamaka school taught the "Middle Path" which stated that because all *dharmas* rely on dependent origination, they lack any self-nature and are therefore empty *(sunya;* 空*)*. The deficiency of this philosophical system lies in the absence of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine which contains the doctrine of the dual aspects of the Absolute--its empty and non-empty aspects. The Madyamaka teaching resorts to negative language and thus cannot reveal the ultimate nature of reality.

Zong-mi presented two different, yet compatible, schemes in his *Inquiry* and *Chan Preface*. In the first he articulated the five-fold classification scheme outlined above, while in the second he presented a three-fold system which may be applied as an overlay onto the first

scheme. The first teaching contains three subcategories:

1. Secret Teaching which Relies on the Nature and Speaks of Marks[155]
   A. Men and gods, and cause and effect teaching
   B. Eliminates Doubt and Extinguishes Suffering and Joy
   C. Consciousness to Negate Objects
2. Secret Teaching which Negates Marks and Reveals the Nature
3. Teaching which Openly Reveals that the True-Mind is the Nature

When applied as an overlay on the previous scheme, it corresponds as follows:

1. Teaching of Men and Gods	-->	1. Men and gods, Cause and Effect Teaching
2. Hinayana	-->	2. Eliminates Doubt and Extinguishes Suffering and Joy
3. Analysis of Characteristics	-->	3. Consciousness to Negate Objects
4. Negation of Characteristics	-->	4. Secret Teaching which Negates Marks and Reveals the Nature
5. Teaching which Reveals the Nature	-->	5. Teaching which Openly Reveals that the True-Mind is the Nature

[155]Fox translates this as "characteristics" (183); Gregory translates it as "phenomenal appearances" (210); and Broughton here translates it as "marks" (157).

The first two major categories of the three-fold scheme are classified as esoteric because they do not directly or explicitly reveal the Nature and thus rely upon expedients, while the third employs neither expedients nor esoteric teachings, but instead explicitly reveals that "all sentient beings possess the True-mind of emptiness and calmness, [which is] from without beginning intrinsically pure."[156] That is, the third category reveals that all beings are endowed with a pure nature and possess the seeds of Buddhahood--the Tathagatagarbha.

By using the descriptions "direct" or "indirect", Zong-mi is referring to affirmative and negative descriptions of the nature of emptiness. This important feature of religious discourse is one of the determining factors in Zong-mi's categorization of Buddhist teachings. This is so because of his emphasis on soteriology, and as mentioned previously, his *pan-jiao* system is a progression from inferior to superior teachings based on their efficacy in revealing the fullest truth of the Buddha's teaching.

In short, Zong-mi's prescription for relieving sentient beings from suffering involves reversing the process of phenomenal evolution through the experience of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. Zong-mi describes his dual ten-step model for Buddhist practice in the *Chan Preface*: The first ten steps outline the progression from intrinsic enlightenment to delusion, while the second set presents the steps for attaining release from the bonds of delusion

[156]Check accuracy, Broughton 188.

and a return to the state of intrinsical enlightenment. In order to illustrate this process,. Zong-mi draws an analogy between the dual ten-stage path and a "common man."

On the path toward delusion, the first stage is the True Mind, or original awakening, of sentient beings, which Zong-mi compares to a wealthy and virtuous nobleman who is within his own house.[157] Without engaging in proper practice, sentient beings next fall into unenlightenment (non-awakening), which is the second step toward delusion; this may be compared to the man falling asleep within his house and forgetting who he is. The third stage consists of the arising of thoughts as a result of unenlightenment, which is like the dreams of the man who has fallen asleep. When thoughts arise, the notion of a subject who perceives the thoughts also arises. This fourth stage corresponds to the subjective thoughts in a dream. In the fifth stage, when the subject appears, then the body of the sense organs and world falsely manifest themselves. This is like the man who sees in his dream that he is dwelling in misery and squalor and discriminates between what he likes and dislikes. In the sixth stage, beings begin to grasp at *dharmas* because they incorrectly believe that the *dharmas* are real, instead of recognizing them as manifestations of their own thoughts. During this stage, the man begins to grasp at the*dharmas* in his dream. Because they are clinging to *dharmas* as real, sentient beings then begin to draw distinctions between self and others. The

[157]The dual ten-stage path as presented here is based upon Broughton's translation of the *Ch'an Preface* in *Kuei-feng Tsung-mi: The Convergence of Ch'an and the Teachings*, p.269-282.

seventh stage is characterized by grasping at the idea of self, which is like the dreaming man who believes that it is "he" who is trapped in poverty. In the eighth stage, the three poisons of covetousness, anger, and foolishness develop as a result of attachment to the idea of a self. Zong-mi describes the dreaming man who desires what is pleasureable and avoids what is not. Following the emergence of the three poisons, one produces good and bad *karma* in the ninth stage, just as the dreaming man committs acts which generate good and bad *karma*. In the tenth stage, sentient beings experience karmic retribution, which is comparable to the dreaming man receiving reward and punishment for his actions.

The ten stages on the path toward enlightenment each counteract a stage in the progression towards delusion.

> Therefore, these ten begin at the end [of the delusion sequence] and work their way backward, overturning and destroying the former ten [along the way]. There is only a small discrepency involving the first stage of awakening and the first two stages of delusion.[158]

In the first stage on the path toward enlightenment, a sentient being encounters a good friend who generates awakening to the True mind, or original awakening, which thus counteracts the second stage of delusion. The sentient being then takes refuge in the three jewels of the Buddha, *dharma*, and *sangha*. The second stage involves the

[158]Broughton 274.

development of compassion, knowledge, and vows, including the resolution to attain enlightenment. This stage corresponds to the tenth stage of delusion. The third stage involves cultivating the five practices of giving, morality, forbearance, striving, and meditative-insight, which overturns the ninth stage of delusion. In the fourth stage, the sentient being "opens up" and develops the three minds of compassion, knowledge, and vows which counteract the three poisons of the eighth stage of delusion. In the fifth stage, sentient beings realize that there is no abiding self, which negates the false belief in the existence of a self. Then, the sixth stage corresponds to the recognition that all *dharmas* lack a self-nature, thereby overturning the fifth stage of delusion. Upon realizing that objects are empty of a self-nature, one attains mastery over them and overturns the fifth stage of delusion. In the eighth stage, one attains mastery over the perceiving mind, which counteracts the fourth stage of delusion. The ninth stage corresponds to liberation from thoughts, or ultimate awakening, which thereby overturns the third stage of delusion. In the tenth stage of awakening, one becomes a Buddha and returns to original awakening, thus overturning the second stage of unenlightenment.

II. Zong-mi's Classification of Chan

One of Zong-mi's most important contributions to Buddhist thought was his association of the various Chan schools with doctrinal "sister" traditions. Broughton has spoken of this innovation as "the convergence of Ch'an and the teachings" and has likened his inclusion of the Chan schools into the traditional *pan-jiao* format as the creation of a "*pan-chan.*"[159] Zong-mi entered Buddhism through the He-ze lineage of Shen-hui's Chan which advocated sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. Although Zong-mi later transferred his allegiance from the Chan school to Hua-yan, he did not harbor any ill will toward Chan and is still considered a patriarch in both traditions.

Much of Zong-mi's writing on Chan, including his two major works, the *Chan Chart* and the *Chan Preface*, was written as a response to the bitter rivalry which existed between the practice-oriented and exegetical schools as well as among the various Chan schools themselves. Consequently, Zong-mi's writings emphasize their commonalities and his classification system makes clear that they are complementary approaches to Buddhism rather than mutually exclusive religious traditions. In the *Chan Preface* he describes their relationship: "The *sutras* are the Buddha word, while Ch'an is the Buddha mind. What the Buddhas have said and what was in their

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[159]Broughton iii.

minds cannot possibly be contradictory."[160] This example from the *Chan Preface* is typical of Zong-mi's approach to the dilemma, and the logic displayed here is similar to that which he promoted to reconcile the proponents of sudden enlightenment and gradual enlightenment. In both situations, he sought to overcome the debate by developing a coherent and overarching ontological framework capable of subsuming the various competing factions and rendering their arguments meaningless.

By Zong-mi's time the Chan schools had reached a heretofore unprecedented prominence in Chinese Buddhism and had branched out into many different directions based upon their understanding of the nature of religious practice and the word of the Buddha. The most significant schools in terms of this discussion were the Northern and Southern schools and the latter's subdivision into the Hong-zhou and He-ze lineages.

The gradual/sudden debate began with the introduction of the *Prajña-paramita* texts into China beginning in the second century of the common era and came to a head in the famous dispute over the succession following the Fifth Patriarch Hong-ren (601-674) involving his disciples Hui-neng (638-713) and Shen-xiu (606?-706). As discussed in the first chapter, when the followers of each disciple claimed that their master was the true sixth patriarch, the debate escalated. Whereas previously Shen-xiu had been the most prominent, Shen-hui began a vigorous and often vicious campaign to

[160]Broughton 111.

have Hui-neng declared the legitimate Sixth Patriarch. He publicly denounced Shen-xiu and insisted that the teaching of the Northern School was not authentic and inferior insofar as it represented a gradual approach to enlightenment, and asserted that Hui-neng and the Southern School represented the true mind-to-mind transmission.

Zong-mi commented on the split between the various Buddhist schools:

> Originally, the Buddha expounded the sudden teaching and the gradual teaching. Chan opened up the sudden gate and the gradual gate. The two teachings and the two gates complemented each other, but now, those who discourse [on the *sutras*] are partial towards displaying the gradual meaning, while those who engage in meditation incline towards making the sudden school known. When meditators and lecturers meet, the division between them is far apart.[161]

It is important to note in this passage that Zong-mi associates Chan with the sudden teaching preached by the Buddha and establishes that the Chan school "opened up" the sudden and gradual gates of enlightenment. He also specifies that these two teachings and two approaches to enlightenment are complementary. Zong-mi identified the three types of teachings which correspond to the three realizations of Chan.[162] The three realizations of Chan are:

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[161]*Jing-de chuan-deng lu* 景德傳燈錄 306b:21-23.

[162]The three types of teaching are discussed under the section on Zong-mi's *pan-jiao* system on page 88 under Section 1, subsection C.

1. Stopping the Unreal and Cultivating Mind
2. Cut Off and Nothing to Rely Upon
3. Directly Reveals the Mind-Nature

The first realization, which Zong-mi associates with the Northern School of Chan, refers to the mirror of the pure Buddha-nature being obscured by the dust of ignorance.[163] To overcome this problem, the Northern School teaches that the dust must be swept off the mirror. When the dust is cleared away, the mirror will shine brightly.

The second realization is that *dharmas* have no self-nature and do not truly exist, since "both common and noble *dharmas* are like a dream or mock-show; none of them has any existence."[164] This realization is associated with the Ox-head *(Niu-tou)* School .

The final realization is the one which explicitly reveals that all *dharmas* are the True-Nature.[165] The True-nature is both empty and non-empty, and is the source of all *dharmas*. Both the Hong-zhou line and the He-ze line are identified with this realization. Zong-mi offers the following critical assessment of the Hong-zhou teaching at this point in the *Chan Preface*.

> Your ability right now to talk, act, feel covetousness, anger, compassion, patience, create good or bad *[karma]* and receive suffering or joy, etc., is your Buddha-nature. By virtue of this you are *ab-aeterno* a Buddha. There is no

[163]Broughton 147.

[164]Broughton 149.

[165]Broughton 152.

> other Buddha than this. Once you understand this Heavenly-real-self-so-ness, you should not stir your mind to cultivate the Way. The Way is Mind. You could not possibly use mind to cultivate mind. Evil is also mind. You could not possibly use mind to rid mind [of evil].[166]

Zong-mi considered doctrine such as this to be dangerously misleading and antinomian. Contrast the above passage with his description of the He-ze teaching (his own lineage):

> All *dharmas* are like a dream...Unreal thoughts are *ab-aeterno* calm. The dust objects are *ab-aeterno* empty. The mind of emptiness and calmness is active Knowing which never darkens. This Knowing of emptiness and calmness is your True-nature. Whether you are deluded or awakened, your mind is *ab-aeterno* self-Knowing...Because of beginningless delusion about it, you have falsely grasped body and mind as a self and given rise to such thoughts as covetousness and anger. [But,] if you find a good-friend to show [the Path,] then you will all-at-once awaken to the Knowing of emptiness and calmness. Knowing is no-mindfulness...If you merely obtain the Knowing-seeing of no-mindfulness, then love and hatred will spontaneously decrease, compassion and wisdom will spontaneously increase, sinful *karma* will spontaneously be eliminated, and meritorious practices will spontaneously increase. Once you understand that all marks are non-marks, you practice in a self-so manner but there is no practice. When the depravities are exhausted, *samsara* will cease; once emerging-submerging is extinguished, calmness and illumination will become manifest, and you will respond to everything spontaneously. This is called becoming a

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[166]Broughton 153.

Buddha.[167]

The Hong-zhou lineage dissolved the basis for moral practice due to its radical non-dualism which was based on a faulty understanding of the nature of the *tathagatagarbha*. Zong-mi saw the Northern line and the Hong-zhou as polar opposites in their radical doctrines: Hong-zhou was radically non-dualistic, while Northern Chan was radically dualistic. The He-ze line was superior because it properly understood the empty and non-empty aspects of the *tathagatagarbha*.

[167]Broughton 154-155.

III. Reply to the Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren

The text *Reply to the Ten Questions of Shi Shan-ren*, contained within the *Jing-de chuan deng lu,* was probably composed between 828 and 835.[168] It records ten questions submitted to Zong-mi by Shi and the responses which Zong-mi wrote in return. There is no available information on the identity of Shi Shan-ren, but he appears to have been a follower of Zong-mi.

Zong-mi demonstrates concern for the propagation of the Buddha's teaching and the personal religious cultivation. The questions range from the most basic (i.e., What is the Way?) to more profound questions on the nature of emptiness and production of *dharmas*. Zong-mi's responses are succinct, explicit, and definitive answers to fundamental and timely issues involving religious cultivation. They reflect his stand on the sudden/gradual issue and affirm his belief in the value of traditional Buddhist morality.

The theme of this text is personal religious practice, and an examination of Zong-mi's response to Shi's questions provides insight into his theories on this topic. Shi's very first question seeks to establish a fundamental ground for Buddhist practice when he asks, "What is the Way? How does one attain it...?" Zong-mi's answer is very straightforward and phrased in terms of practice: the Way is the absence of hindrances, and cultivation involves the perception of falsehood. Later in the text, he restates his position on the necessity of

[168]This is Gregory's figure on the date of the text (*TMSB* 320).

practice when he writes: "Aside from cultivating the mind, there is no other gate of practice." The questions then move on to the sudden/gradual debate that one can assume left many persons besides Shi terribly confused as to the proper approach to religious practice. Shi asked for guidance in taking the sudden or gradual approach and expressed his disbelief that one could attain enlightenment in one instant. Zong-mi responds with an explanation of his philosophy of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation and avoids partisan commentary on the Northern/Southern rivalry. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of personal cultivation and practice.

Shi Shan-ren also appears to have been bothered by what he perceived to be inconsistencies in Buddhist teaching. Zong-mi addresses the topics of *karma*, salvation, and *nirvana*. Many of his responses take the form of metaphors and encourage Shi to rethink his question. For instance, Shi asked, "[W]hy do all the *sutras* repeatedly say that attaining the Way necessarily involves adorning the Buddha-land and converting sentient beings?" Zong-mi replies that the adornments are not really adornments, just as reflected images are not really forms.

Zong-mi's closing response to Shi is a message of reassurance and comfort which reflects a firm belief in the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith.* He advises Shi to "awaken to the fact that one's own mind is the Buddha-mind, and perceive that the fundamental nature is the *dharma* nature."

The first question was: What is the Way? How does one attain it through active cultivation? Is it necessary to cultivate it completely, or does it not rely on meritorious actions?

My response is: Lacking hindrances is the Way. Perceiving falsehood is cultivation. Although the Way is fundamentally perfect *(yuan)*, falsehoods arise and become bonds. When all false thoughts are exhausted, then cultivation is complete.

The second question is: If the Way is attained by relying on cultivation, then this is artificial. In that case, it is the same as worldly *dharmas*, which are empty, false, and insubstantial. Thus, if it decays after it is attained, how could this be called leaving the world?

My response is: Artificiality is *karma* resulting from the bondage to passions, which is called an empty and false world. Non-creating is cultivation and practice, which is truly leaving the world.

The third question is: As for the [practice] which one cultivates, should it be sudden or gradual? If it is the gradual [approach to enlightenment], then one may forget the former and neglect the latter. How can one achieve completion [i.e., enlightenment] by means of combining them together? If it is sudden, then there are myriad practices and many methods. Surely it is not possible to attain perfection and completion in an instant!

My response is: The true principle is in fact suddenly perfected after awakening. False passions are gradually exhausted after one stops them. Sudden completion is like first giving birth to a child. After one day, its body is already complete. Gradual cultivation is like the long period of raising the child to adulthood. Only after many years have passed is its intention established.

The fourth question is: In general, as for the methods of cultivating the mind-ground, are they just awakening the mind so that everything becomes clear, or are there just different gates of practice? If there are

different gates of practice, what do we call the Southern School's aim of immediate enlightenment? If our awakening is precisely the same as all the Buddhas', why do we not produce brilliant light such as the gods emanate?

My response is: Do you recognize that the frozen pond is at the same time completely water? It requires the male element in nature *(yang)* to fuse and melt. Through awakening, an ordinary person is perfected. One practices good conduct by relying on the power of the *dharma*. The water flows and glistens when the ice melts. At that point, it reveals the merits of purifying and cleansing. When falsehoods are exhausted, then the mind and spirit circulate freely and begin to produce a penetrating and radiant response. Aside from cultivating the mind, there is no other gate of practice.

The fifth question is: If it is the case that one attains Buddhahood only through cultivating the mind, then why do all the *sutras* repeatedly say that attaining the Way necessarily involves adorning the Buddha-land and converting sentient beings?

My response is: While the mirror is bright, it reflects thousands of images. While the mind is pure, its spiritual power responds in myriad ways. The reflected images resemble the majestic kingdom of the Buddha. With supernatural powers, then one can teach and convert living beings. Just as the majestic adornments [of the Buddha-lands] are [really] not adornments, so in reflected images the forms are not forms.

The sixth question is: All the *sutras* speak of releasing living beings from the wheel of transmigration. Yet if living beings are in fact not living beings, why labor to release them?

My response is: If [we can] in fact save living beings, then we should labor for their sake. If one says to oneself that they are in fact not living beings, then why not save them in the customary way, while [realizing] that there is no such thing as "salvation"?

The seventh question is: All the *sutras* say that the Buddha constantly abides, while some say that the Buddha entered *nirvana (mie du)*. If [the Buddha] is permanent, then he cannot be extinguished; while if he is extinguished, then he is not permanent. Surely this is contradictory[169]!

My response is: Departing from all forms is [characteristic] of all Buddhas. How can it be true that [Buddhas] appear in the world and enter *nirvana*? Whether they appear or disappear depends on potentiality and conditions. If potentiality and conditions respond, then [the bodhisattva] will appear under the *[bodhi-]* tree. If potentiality and conditions are exhausted, then [the bodhisattva] will enter *nirvana* within the grove of Sal trees.[170] He is like pure water, without deliberate intentions or specific form. He neither manifests specific form nor is possessed of an ego. The coming and going manifestations of outer substances are not the Buddha-body.[171] How could they be the appearance and disappearance of the Tathagata?

The eighth question is: What does what is produced by the Buddha's transforming power refer to, [is it] that I am produced like the other?. Since the Buddha does not produce [anything], what is the meaning of production? If one says that when the mind produces, *dharmas* are produced, and that when the mind is extinguished, *dharmas* are extinguished, then how does one attain the *dharma*-forbearance of non-production?

My response is: As for transformations, they are indeed empty, and emptiness does not produce anything, so why do you question the meaning of production? when production and extinguishing are completely extinguished, then [the resulting] calmness and extinction are true

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[169]lit. "mutually opposing".

[170]The place of the Buddha's death (*SH* 323a),

[171]The threefold embodiment of Buddha (*SH* 229b).

thusness.

The ninth question is: All the Buddhas complete the Way and expound the *dharma* only for the sake of releasing the living beings from the wheel of transmigration. Since living beings have the six paths of transmigration, why does the Buddha still reside among human beings to manifest transformation? Furthermore, after the Buddha's extinction, he entrusted the *dharma* to Kashyapa by means of mind-to-mind transmission. Up to the seventh patriarch, [the *dharma* was] transmitted to one person in each generation. Since it is said that all living beings attain the mind-ground of the master (Buddhahood), why are transmissions and conferment not universal?

My response is: The sun and moon in the beautiful heavens shine together in the six directions, but the blind do not see this and those who are under a basin do not know it. It is not that the sun and moon do not [shine] universally, it is the fault of the screens and partitions. The meaning of [who is] saved and who is not is similar to this. It is not limited to humans and *devas* being distinguished from ghosts and beasts. It is only because [those in] the human path are able to assemble together, and transmit and confer without interruption. [Therefore,] it is only known that the Buddha appears among humans. After attaining *nirvana*, he entrusted [the *dharma*] to Kashyapa. In turn, it was passed down to one person [at a time]. This [person] was also probably known in the corresponding age as the master of the teaching. This is similar to the earth not having two kings [at the same time]. It is not that those who attain salvation are [limited to] only these few [leaders].

The tenth question is: What does a monk rely on to make a vow? In honor of what teaching does he leave the household life? How does one cultivate and practice to obtain what taste of the *dharma*? With regard to what is practiced, what stage does one reach? Should one settle or cultivate the mind? If one settles the mind, then this

interferes with cultivating the mind. If one cultivates the mind, then this stirs up thoughts so that they are not pacified. I ask, "Why is this called studying the Way?" If one pacifies the mind and unifies and composes it, then how is this different from disciples who settle the nature? I humbly desire you, Most Virtuous [One], to put great compassion, sympathy, true principle, and the absolute in motion to explain [answers to these questions] in turn.

My response is: One should realize that the four elements[172] are like brick tile illusions, understand that the six *gunas*[173] are like flowers in the sky, awaken to the fact that one's own mind is the Buddha-mind, and perceive that the fundamental nature is the *dharma* nature--[it is on this basis] that one makes a vow [to attain enlightenment]. Understanding that the mind is impermanent is [what one should] practice and cultivate. Understanding impermanence is the taste of the *dharma*. When permanence is manifested by *dharmas*, this stirs one's thoughts. Therefore, when people enter the dark they cannot see anything. But now, if one lacks a place upon which to settle [one's thoughts], then one does not pollute or display [anything]. Therefore, it is like when people have eyes and see all sorts of *dharmas* as clearly as the sun's radiance. How can these people possibly be disciples who settle the nature? Since they lack a place to settle [their minds], how can they talk about such a place?
The Shang-shu Wen Zao of Shan-nan also asked a question:

People who have awakened to the fundamental principle and stopped falsehoods do not produce *karma*. After they die, what does their spiritual nature rely on?

My response is: All living beings possess an enlightened nature.[174] Their spiritual [nature] is

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[172]The four realms: earth, water, fire, and wind.

[173]The qualities produced by the organs and objects of sense (*SH* 134a).

[174]The enlightened mind free from all illusion. "The mind as agent of...enlightenment" (*SH* 480a).

enlightened, empty, quiet, and identical to that of the Buddha. But because for beginning-less *kalpas* they have not yet awakened, they falsely cling to the body as their own form, which therefore gives rise to love, hatred, and other passions. According with passions, they create *karma*. In accord with *karma*, they experience birth, old age, sickness, death, and revolve in *samsára* for many *kalpas*. Thus, the enlightened nature within the body is neither born nor dies.

However, it is like being driven and harassed in a dream while the body is fundamentally peaceful and relaxed. It is like the water making ice while its moist nature does not change. If one is able to awaken to the fact that this nature it is the *dharma* body, and that fundamentally is not reborn, then what is there to rely on? The numinous spirit is not darkened; intelligent and bright, it is constantly aware. [The enlightened nature] does not come from anyplace or go anywhere, yet it often gives rise to false clinging and a habitual nature, by which it forms joy, anger, grief, and delight that minutely circulate and penetrate [oneself]. Although the true principle is suddenly understood, these passions are difficult to remove completely. It is necessary to be aware of and examine them for a long time and destroy them again and again. It is like [the way] the wind ceases suddenly and waves stop gradually. How could it possibly be that what one has cultivated over one lifetime is just the same as the powers and abilities of the Buddhas? It is only appropriate to consider *nirvana* to be one's own body; do not recognize the body of form.[175] Consider spiritual understanding to be one's own mind; do not recognize false thoughts. If false thoughts arise, do not follow any of them. Then, when approaching the end of life, one's *karma* will naturally not be binding. Although there is that which

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[175] i.e., the corporeal body.

the intermediate stage[176] inclines toward, one will be free and in heaven or in the human realm one will be reborn as one wishes. If thoughts of love and hate have already vanished, then one will not receive the body which one was fated to receive. One is thus able to change short into long and the mundane into the sublime, and if the [ability] minutely circulates and penetrates [oneself], then all will be calm and extinguished *(nirvana).* Only [those who are] completely enlightened and very wise can exist independent and bright. Then, in accord with potentiality and response, they manifest countless bodies to save those living beings who have [karmic] affinities.[177] They are called Buddhas. I respectfully respond and explain this doctrine. The Bodhisattva Asvaghosha[178] gathered together and arranged the main ideas of 100 volumes of Mahayana *sutras* in order to create his commentary on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* Within this commentary he established a doctrine. He expounded that the minds of all living beings possess an enlightened principle and an unenlightened principle. Within the enlightened [principle], there further exists a fundamental enlightenment principle and an initial enlightenment principle. Although what the former expounds only briefly illuminates the principle of absolute truth and speaks of it from the point of view of where one observes the mind, yet the meaning of his teaching is also identical to other *sastras* which say that from the beginning one is identical to the Buddha. This is fundamental enlightenment.[179] From time without beginning, this has not been recognized.

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[176]The intermediate stage lies between death and reincarnation.

[177]Those living beings who "are influenced by and receptive to the Buddha" (*SH* 215a).

[178]The twelfth patriarch of Buddhism and a prolific writer who lived in Benares.

[179]*Ben Jie* can also signify "Mind".

If people are able to realize this, they are initially enlightened.[180] Within the process of first becoming enlightened, there are also sudden awakening and gradual cultivation. From this [point] one next reaches the stage of also lacking a place to go. This is sudden awakening. From [this stage], although one still often produces false clinging, this is gradual cultivation. Within gradual cultivation, from the time of the initial vow to attain complete enlightenment[181] until one reaches perfect Buddha-hood, there are three stages of spiritual independence. From this [stage] to the stage of being reborn as one wishes, one receives rebirth independently. From the time when there are thoughts of love and hatred, this is the stage of independent transformation. From the point of minute penetration to the end is the final stage of spiritual independence. Furthermore, when one is able to consider *nirvana* to be one's own body, then *karma* will naturally be unable to attach itself. This is precisely the essential point of those who have awakened to principle, cultivate the mind morning and evening, and practice cessation and contemplation.

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[180]"The initial functioning of mind or intelligence as a process of "becoming", arising from *ben jue* [fundamental enlightenment]..." (*SH* 254a).

[181]*fa xin*--"to start out for *bodhi* or perfect enlightenment; mental resolve or initiative..." (*SH* 384a).

Conclusion

The "man in the middle," Gui-feng Zong-mi, was a model of Chinese Buddhist syncretism in both his career and personal life. He was able to create harmonious interaction between rival schools and religious systems in his writings and his practice. With a foot in both the exegetical and meditative traditions, Zong-mi was able to combine the best of both approaches to Buddhist religious life and philosophy.

A native of Sichuan, Zong-mi entered Buddhism through the He-ze lineage of Southern Chan and received ordination in the Lu tradition. He first experienced awakening while reading a passage from the *Yuan-jue jing* and pledged himself to explicating that text. After studing with a number of masters, he encountered the writings of the Fourth Hua-yan Patriarch, Cheng-guan, and felt compelled to seek out this teacher. Zong-mi then changed his affiliation to the Hua-yan School but maintained close ties with the Chan tradition, as he perceived the exegetical and meditative approaches to be complementary. Zong-mi enjoyed a prosperous career and received numerous honors, including the purple robe granted by the emperor. However, following his involvement in the Sweet Dew Incident of 835, he disappeared from view.

Zong-mi was primarily driven by soteriological concerns. More specifically, he worked to develop a doctrinal basis for meditative practice and his major contributions to Chinese Buddhist thought lie in

this area. The model which he developed drew from the Hua-yan vision of the harmonious interpenetration of principle and phenomena, and he used this as a basis for Chan meditative practice. This model, which advocated sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation, was based on his understanding of the *tathagatagarbha* doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith*.

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Song Gao Seng Zhuan

"Biography of the Tang Dynasty Monk Zong Mi of the Grass Hut Monastery at Gui Peak"[1]

Page 1B

The monk Zong Mi was a man of the He clan and was from Xi-chong county[2] of Guo-zhou.[3] His family was eminent and prosperous. At a young age, he was well-versed in Confucian texts.

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He wanted to engage in worldly affairs in order to serve living beings. Bearing superior talent, he still had to follow the Accounts Clerk[4] [to travel for the examination].[5] In the second year of the Yuan-He period (808 C.E.)[6], Mi by chance called upon Chan Master Yuan[7] of Sui-zhou.[8] Although

[1]Located in modern Sichuan Province.

[2]Xichong county still bears the same name today and is located seventeen kilometers from Nanchong in modern-day Sichuan Province.

[3]Guozhou is roughly the area of modern-day Sichuan.

[4]Hucker no.566.

[5]I am indebted to Professor Jan Yun-hua for his assistance with this passage.

[6]The Yuan-he period lasted from 806-820 C.E..

[7]Dao Yuan (dates unavailable).

[8]Suizhou is modern-day Suiyu.

Yuan had not yet spoken with him, Mi joyfully admired him. He then became Dao Yuan's disciple, took the tonsure, and received his instruction. In the same year, Zong Mi approached and presented himself to *Vinaya* Master Zheng. Subsequently, he called upon Zhang[9] of Jingnan.[10] Zhang said, "You are one who will transmit the teaching and ought to preach and guide people at the imperial capital." Afterwards, he visited Chan Master Zhao[11] of Luo-yang.[12] Zhao said, "You are a person [with the potential to become a] *bodhisattva*, [but] who can recognize you?" Finally, he visited Hua-yan Master Guan[13] of Shang-du.[14] Guan said, "Who else but you is able to follow me in roaming about in the Vairocana of Hua-yan?"[15]

In the past, when he was in Si-chuan, Zong Mi received the sutras after having purified himself. Having obtained the *Complete Enlightenment Sutra*[16] in twelve chapters, he deeply penetrated to the

[9]Zhang (d.821) is also known as Wei-zhong of Chengdu.

[10]Province.

[11]Shen Zhao (776-838).

[12]Luoyang bears the same name today and is located in modern Henan Province.

[13]Cheng Guan (738-839), the fourth patriarch of Hua-yan Buddhism.

[14]Modern-day Xian in Shaanxi Province.

[15]In other texts, this passage is quoted differently. The epitaph of Pei Xiu, for instance, states, "Who else but you is able to follow me in roaming about in the Lotus Womb of Vairocana?"

[16]*Scripture of Complete Enlightenment* or *Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment.*

true meaning of the text, and vowed to transmit this sutra. At Han-shang, due to an ill monk[17] entrusting him with the Hua-yan commentary, immediately thereafter he expounded upon it, even though he had not studied it even once. Thereupon, he then composed commentaries to the *Complete Enlightenment, Hua-yan Sutra,*[18] *Nirvana Sutra,*[19] *Diamond Sutra,*[20] *Awakening of Faith,*[21] *Consciousness-Only,*[22] *Ullambana,*[23] *Dharmadhatu,*[24] *Contemplation and Action Sutras* and others. He edited the *Fa-yi* [25] and the Classification of the Ritual and Penitential Offerings and the Realization Chart Outline.

Page 2B

Zong Mi also collected the sayings of the various Chan lines of

[17]The ill monk was Ling-feng (d.810). Following this incident, Zong Mi decided that it must have been karmic predestination which permitted Ling-feng to survive long enough to transmit this scripture to him.

[18]*Avatamsaka Sutra.*

[19]*Da-sheng nie-pan jing.*

[20]*Vajraccedika-prajnaparamita Sutra.*

[21]*Da-sheng qi-xin lun.*

[22]*Cheng wei-shi lun.*

[23]*Yu-lan-pen jing.*

[24]*Hua-yan fa-jie guan men.*

[25]This refers to Zong Mi's *Za-shu zhan-da fa-yi ji* (Collection of Miscellaneous Correspondence on the Meaning of the Dharma).

transmission. Making them into a Chan canon, he compiled them and wrote a preface. There were also his collected correspondence, *gathas*, discussions, and also a commentary in five *juan* on the four division *Vinaya*,[26] for which he transcribed a foreward in two *juan*. Altogether, [his writings totalled] two-hundred-plus *juan* with six charts. All his teachings were equally based on one true mind. Manifesting the true essence, he harmonized practice and theory and was exceptional in his treatment of others. Obscuring the distinction between others and self, he alone moved beyond [this distinction].

Mi repeatedly entered the Inner Palace where Emperor [Wen-zong (r.827-841)] questioned him on the essentials of the *dharma*. In the second year of the Da-he reign[27] at the Qing-cheng festival,[28] the emperor summoned him and granted him the purple robe, making him "Most Virtuous."[29] Subsequently, he requested to return to the mountains. On the sixth day of the first month of the first year of Hui-chang[30] (841 C.E.), he died in meditation at the Monastery of the Pagoda of the Arising of Blessings.[31] His appearance was just like that of an ordinary day and his

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[26]"The four-division Vinaya or discipline of the Dharmagupta school, divided into four sections of 20, 15, 14, and 11 [zhuan]" (Soothill and Hodous 171a).

[27]The Da He reign period lasted from (827-836).

[28]This festival was in honor of the emperor's birthday.

[29]Peter Gregory translates this term as "Great Worthy".

[30]The Hui-chang reign period lasted from 841 to 847.

[31]Located in Chang-an.

countenance was even more joyful. On the seventh day, he was moved to a coffin. The strength of his self realization was evident. On the twenty-second day of the same month, monks, laypeople, and others escorted his whole body to Guifeng. On the thirteenth day of the second month, he was cremated and they obtained several dozen[32] relics. These shone with a white light and glistened brightly. Afterwards, the disciples tearfully searched among all the ashes, and when they had retrieved all of the relics, they returned. They collected and stored all of them at the stone pagoda. His compassion for those with whom he had no karmic connection was evident. His common age was sixty-two, but he had been a monk for thirty-four years. His dying commands were: "Raise up my body and give it to the birds and beasts.

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Having burned my bones, they should scatter them, and not house them in a stupa. They should not feel sad and yearn for me so as to disrupt their meditation and contemplation. At each Qing-ming festival they shall ascend the mountain, where, after preaching the way for seven days, they should then depart." The abbot's remaining instructions were, "They should remain in accord with the *vinaya* regulations. Those who oppose this are not my disciples."

In the beginning when the teachings of Mi were already fragrant[33] and his reputation was considered brilliant and glorious, the monks adored

[32]lit. "several tens."

[33]=well-known.

the odor of goats[34] since it was like him. Powerful courtiers responded in a similar manner.

From the Chang-qing (821 C.E.) and Yuan-he periods on, the eunuchs who had achieved distinction and held power were ablaze with rebellion. The inner and outer[35] feared and suspected each other and the emperor was in danger.

At that time, the minister[36] Li Xun (d.835) was greatly esteemed by Zong-mi. During the False Sweet Dew Incident[37] of the Kai-cheng period (836-841) the eunuchs all led the five hundred imperial guardsmen[38] going out of the pavilion, and they slaughtered everyone they met.

At that time, Wang Ya, Jia Su, and Shu Yuan-yu[39] were just then assembling for the feast at [the residence of] the Secretariat[40] when they heard that this disaster had occurred and rushed off to enter the Zhong-nan mountains to take refuge with Zong Mi. Only Li Xun wanted to seek the tonsure to hide himself, [but Zong-mi's] disciples prevented it. Xun

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[34]refers to an attraction, i.e., "they were attracted to him."

[35]The "inner and outer" here refer to the inner and outer courts.

[36]There is no specific listing in Hucker for *cai-chen*.

[37]The Sweet Dew Incident (835 C.E.) was an abortive plot led by Li Xun to remove the eunuchs from power.

[38]Hucker no. 1139.

[39]All three of these men were chief ministers at the time of the Sweet Dew Incident (Preston 40).

[40]Hucker no. 1606.

changed his plans and hastened to Feng-xiang.[41] At that time, Qiu Shi-liang knew of it and sent men to arrest Mi and enter the Left Army camp. To his face, he recounted his crime of not reporting [Li Xun] and was about to harm him. Mi cheerfully said,

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"I, a poor monk, knew Xun for many years, and I also knew of his rebellion, but in my master's[42] teaching of the *dharma* it is stated that upon encountering suffering beings, one should help them without hesitation.[43] I do not crave my own bodily life, and if I die, I would certainly do so willingly."[44] Lieutenant Commander Yu Heng-zhi[45] praised him and submitted a memorial to the throne to pardon the monk's crimes. When Chao-shi heard of it, he seized his wrist with regret and burst into tears over it.

Some said, "Is Master Mi a Chan master, a *Vinaya* master, or a commentator on the *sutras* ?" Responding to this, I say, "As for Zong-Mi, he is a country fought over on four sides. No one is able to call him their own, yet all may say that he is very wise and completely enlightened." He

[41]Located in Shanxi.

[42]referring to Sakyamuni Buddha.

[43]Dr. Overmyer suggests that this passage is a continuation of the previous sentence, thus reading, "...without begrudging one's own life."

[44]lit. "with a sweet mind".

[45]He was a general of the eunuch-controlled Shen-ce army (Preston 2).

is a great bodhisattva who has attained self-realization and benefits others. For this reason Pei Xiu's[46] eulogy said, "The critics believe that Master Mi did not maintain Chan practice, but widely lectured upon the *sutras* and *sastras*. He roamed through famous towns and great cities and considered establishing [Buddhism] to be his responsibility. Then was he just a slave of a good reputation?[47] Could it possibly be that he had not yet forgotten fame and profit? Alas! How could the critics understand the inclinations of the great Way?

As for the one mind, it encompasses all the myriad truths. Divided, it becomes discipline, meditation, and wisdom. Opened, it becomes the six perfections.[48] Scattered, it becomes the myriad practices.[49] All the myriad practices are derived from[50] one mind. One mind is never in opposition to the myriad practices. Meditation is just one of the six modes of salvation (*paramitas*) and that is all. How can it (Chan) encompass all the teachings?

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[46]Pei Xiu (787?-860) was a prominent scholar-official and a close friend of Zong Mi.

[47]This sentence and the one which follows both employ a common construction for rhetorical questions. The implied answer is: of course not.

[48]*paramita*(s).

[49]Soothill and Hodous translate this term *wan xing* as "all modes of salvation".

[50]lit. "never once not been the one mind".

Moreover, the Tathagata entrusted his dharma-eye to Kashyapa[51]. He did not give him the dharma and practice[52]. For this reason, the *dharma* refers to those who attain realization through their own mind. Practice refers to those who start by following their desires. They are not necessarily always the same; but the one mind is produced by all things, although it is not dependent on the myriad *dharmas*. For those who attain it, they are then independent in the *dharma*. For those who see it, there are no obstacles in the teaching. If you base yourself on what is not the dharma, then you will not be able to preach the dharma. If you base yourself on what is not the teachings, then you will not able to transmit the teachings. How can one possibly seek [the true *dharma*] with only its tracks and traces?

From Kashyapa to Punyayasas[53] there were altogether ten patriarchs who were saved by *arhats* and were themselves also *arhats*. Ashvaghosa[54], Nagarjuna[55], and Vasubandhu[56] initially opened up the

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[51]Mahakashyapa was one of the Buddha's disciples and is recognized as the first patriarch and first compiler of the Buddhist canon (Soothill and Hodous 316b).

[52]Dr. Overmyer suggests the use of "conduct" for *xing* for this passage.

[53]The tenth patriarch.

[54]Twelfth patriarch and author of numerous Buddhist texts.

[55]Fourteenth patriarch.

[56]Twenty-first patriarch and author of numerous Buddhist texts.

Mahayana and wrote the *sastras* and Buddhist *sutras* to annihilate[57] non-Buddhist paths and sang a prelude for the Bodhisattvas, but the Honorable Jaya alone considers the power of the precepts to be the awe-inspiring and divine. The Honorable Mala considers ascetic practice to be the traces of the Way. Of all the other patriarchs, some widely preached the true religion. Some concentrated their minds on meditative silence, and some left [this world] through ritual suicide. Some annihilated themselves through self-immolation. Some climbed trees in order to proclaim the end. Some were executed to repay their debts. In this then, the dharma is always the same, but the practice is not necessarily the same.

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Moreover, following the traces [of earlier Buddhists] does not constitute good practice. Preserving the law does not constitute skillfulness. If it does not hasten, then it is not considered a great ox. If he does not surpass others, then he is not considered a great official. For this reason, the way of our teacher [is thus]: He considers wisdom and insight to be the wonderful gate of *dharma*; and tranquility and purity to be the proper tastes [of the *dharma*]; compassion and forbearance to be shields; wisdom and cessation to be swords and lances. It is a high fortification that crushes the inner demons[58]. It is a strong army which entraps the bandits from outside. [His teachings are a means of] suppressing and pacifying the heterodox and confused, and of untying and

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[57]"annihilate" in the Buddhist context refers to annihilation through argumentation and debate, not to physical violence.

[58]*mara*.

releasing the black rope cages of samsara.

When he encountered an impoverished person, he shouted at him and sent him to return home. When he saw a poor woman, he shouted at her to look after her home. The impoverished person cannot return home. The poor woman is not wealthy. Our master was ashamed of it. If the three vehicles did not prosper, or if in bearing responsibilities one was not competent in one's job, then our master was ashamed of this. For this reason, his mind was disturbed in aiding and pulling up [sentient beings] and he was concerned about explaining and persuading.[59] He did not exalt himself on the basis of one mode of practice, and did not consider himself famous on the basis of one form of virtue. If there were those who took refuge in him, he did not wait for them to invite him before he went. If there were those who sought benefit, he did not wait for them to become zealous before he opened things up for them. Although a youth was not simple and honest in his response to his treatment [by Master Mi]

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and although the stubborn and hateful one was not negligent in his earnest exertion, [Zong Mi] used this to expand the religion and save sentient beings and help in transforming the states and families in this way. For this reason, those who were intimate with the master's teachings [said]: If they were poor, then he gave (*dana*) to them; if they were fierce, then he calmed them; if unyielding, then he made them follow along with things; if disobedient, then he made them obedient; if confused, then he opened up

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[59]a form of *upaya*..

[their ignorance]; if lazy, then he exhorted them; if they glorified themselves, then he made them content; if they relied on themselves, then he transformed them; if they were selfish, then he made them unselfish; if they were drowning in their desires, he made them righteous. In all cases, there were nobles and laypeople who abandoned their households and entered his teaching with their wives and children living in different monasteries. There are those who transformed their occupations, stopped eating meat, maintained the precepts and *dharma*, and brought their families to live nearby. There are those who, leaving, practiced government and ruling principle and considered saving the sick and suffering to be their way. There are those who hastily serve their father and mother and consider rites and paying homage to be proper conduct. The remainder come waveringly and go joyfully. Raising their sleeves, they arrive. With full bellies they return. The place is very crowded [such that] it cannot be measured, [including] the bodhisattvas to whom the true Tathagata had entrusted [the *dharma*]; the good friends whom the living beings did not invite. Weren't there also the people of the four necessities? And surely there were the practitioners of the ten stages? I do not recognize the breadth or depth of their realm and courtyard. How could the critics also know the destiny of the great way?

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Such was his meeting of minds for the sake of understanding a great

man.[60] Those whom Mi knew well were numerous, but none were as profound as the high level prime minister. It was a case of two people of the same spirit coming together. When Xuan-zong (r.846-859) again opened up the true vehicle, Zong Mi's myriad merits were put completely in order, and he was given the posthumous title: "Chan Master of Meditation (*samadhi*) and Wisdom" and his *stupa* was named "Blue Lotus". Those who carried out the rituals proper to a disciple in upholding the three years of mourning numbered several thousand persons.

The genealogy says: The eulogies of the Prime Minister of He-dong,[61] are called the pinnacle of his writings. But it was not only his best work, but compared to others, how is it possible that they could surpass his writings? When one looks at the effect of his influence, there was never any difference. The shadow waited for the form to arise, and the echo followed the sound. There was Master Zong Mi. If there was Master Mi, then there was Master Prime Minister Pei. If not for Prime Minister Pei, how would we be able to know Master Mi? They continue [each other's work] like a never-ending circle. Since such was the way of these two masters, we can understand the noble truths and observe the *dharma* and the royal law. Accordingly, the practices of Master Mi were very complete. One can esteem the words of Minister Pei as he responded in his role as a government official.

[60]Dr. Overmyer suggests: "Such was his carrying out of his understanding of the mind and actions known by a great man."

[61]This refers to Pei Xiu.

But now, in the Chan school, there are those who do not understand Zong Mi's teachings and criticize Mi on the grounds that it was not fitting for him to expound the various sacred texts. To them I reply: Didn't Bodhidharma say, "My dharma is completely united with principles and instruction, but few study it and few understand. Since they themselves are not able [to understand], they, moreover, influence each other with their own confusion and doubt. Are they not jealous of him? There are some who blame Mi on the grounds that it was not fitting for him to receive high officials and repeatedly visit the emperor. I respond accordingly: Teaching the dharma is entrusted to the emperor and ministers. If, perchance, he had not had contact with the emperor, would Zong Mi still have been able to raise up and manifest the teachings of the school or not? Was not such the case with the Buddha's discussing strengthening the officials of the Cakravartin king? The sentiments of people today [are such that they] criticize those whom they see approaching royal officials and they do not understand at all the intentions of those who approach such ministers. If [those who wish to advise the ruler simply] combine profit and fame, then they will be reproached for taking leave of the ruler. If there are those who approach the ruler for the sake of religious teaching, then how could this not be great? I, Zan-ning, avoid these petty critics, who simply envy him. If his intentions were completely like this, then there is neither the permissible nor the impermissible.

Qin Ding Quan Tang Wen

Epitaph of the Meditation and Wisdom Chan Master

The correct writings inscribed in seal script located in the Hu district[1]. The tablet was eight *chi*[2] and eight *cun*[3] high, four feet two *cun* wide, 36 rows, 65 characters.

The Dharma Tablet of the Biography of the Former Tang Dynasty Meditation and Wisdom Chan Master of Gui Peak.

Composed and written by the Grand Academician of the Hall of Scholarly Worthies,[4] Under-Manager of Affairs[5] of the Zhongshu Gate jointly[6] serving as Probationary[7] Minister of the Master of the Palace with Golden Seals and Purple Ribbon.[8]

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[1]In Shensi Province.

[2]The *chi* is a unit of linear measurement slightly longer than a foot.

[3]The *cun* is a unit of linear measurement equal to about 1/10 of a *chi*.

[4]Hucker no.5962,

[5]Hucker no.4703.

[6]Hucker no.7464.

[7]Hucker no.5355.

[8]Hucker no.1159.

It was inscribed in seal script by Liu Gong-zhuan,[9] a Dynasty Founding Duke[10] receiving taxes from two thousand families, the Supreme Pillar of the State[11] of He-dong prefecture, Probationary Minister[12] of the Board of Works,[13] and Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seals and Purple Ribbon.

The Chan Master of Gui Peak was called Zong Mi, and he was a man of the He clan of Xichong district in Guo-zhou.[14]

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Shakyamuni Buddha has had 39 generations of dharma descendants. Shakyamuni resided in the world for 80 years; for the sake of immeasurable people and devas, *shravakas*,[15] and

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[9]Famous calligrapher (778-865).

[10]Hucker no.3116.

[11]Hucker no.1400.

[12]Hucker no.5042.

[13]Hucker no.3462.

[14]In modern Sichuan Province.

[15]"...a hearer, a term applied to the personal disciples of the Buddha...but its general connotation relates it to Hinayana disciples who understand the four dosmas, rid themselves of the unreality of the phenomenal, and enter nirvana" (Soothill and Hodous 462a).

bodhisattvas, he explained the five precepts[16] and eight precepts,[17] the great and lesser vehicles, the four noble truths, twelve *nidanas*,[18] six perfections *(paramita)*, four limitless minds,[19] three insights, six powers [acquired by a Buddha], thirty-seven conditions [leading to *bodhi*],[20] 10 powers [of a Buddha], four kinds of fearlessness, and the eighteen which were not his own laws. As for the universal truth, the first correct truth is limitless and completely liberates [all sentient beings]. The *samaya*[21] suddenly grasp the gate of enlightenment, nirvana, the eternal dharma-nature, the adornments, Buddha-lands. They perfect all living beings, save devas and humans, and teach bodhisattvas. The entire wonderful way may be called extensive and great. It is complete and thorough, enlarges the *dharmadhatu* to boundlessness, and penetrates the ocean of the

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[16]Soothill and Hodous write that these are the first five of the ten commandments against killing, stealing, illicit sexual conduct, lying, or consuming alcoholic beverages (118b).

[17]These are the first eight of the ten commandments. In addition to the five mentioned above, they preclude the usage of cosmetics or adornments, dancing, music, sleeping on anything other than a mat on the floor, and eating after the noon hour (*SH* 36b).

[18] The twelve links in the chain of existence *(dvadasanga pratityasamutpada)* (*SH* 42b).

[19]The four immeasurables, or infinite Buddha-states of mind (*SH* 178a).

[20]The complete title is *san shi qi (zhu) dao pin.*

[21]There are two possible interpretations for this term *san ming*: *samadhi* and *samaya*. The latter was chosen based on context and may be translated here as "a gathering or coming together".

bhutatathata to the limitless. Neither the temporal and real nor the sudden and gradual neglect affairs.

At last he entrusted the dharma-eye only to the great Kashyapa and commanded that from patriarch to patriarch they should mutually transmit special practices to the world. These were not solely for Kashyapa, but [also for] non-Buddhist humans and devas, *sravakas*, and bodhisattvas.

However, this teaching is the ultimate source of living beings and has been verified by all the Buddhas. It transcends all fundamental principles and is dintinct from all forms. It is not sufficient to use words to discuss wisdom and perception, existence and non-existence, the hidden and the manifest. By investigating it, one gets [to the point of understanding that all is] only mind.

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The minds seal each other. From sealing to sealing the transmissions match each other and permit the radiant light of self-realization. It should simply be accepted and employed.

From Kashyapa to Bodhidharma there were altogether 28 generations. Bodhidharma transmitted to [Hui-] ke.[22] Ke transmitted to [Seng-] Can. Can transmitted to [Dao-] Xin.[23] Xin transmitted to

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[22]Hui-ke (ca.485-ca.555 or 574).

[23]Dao-xin (580-651).

Ren[24] as the fifth patriarch. He also transmitted to Rong[25] for the Ox-head School. Ren transmitted to Neng[26] as the sixth patriarch, and he also transmitted to Xiu[27] for the Northern School. Neng transmitted to Hui[28] for the He-ce School. He-ce to Zong as the seventh patriarch,[29] and he also transmitted to Hai.[30] Hai transmitted to Ma.[31] Ma created the Jiang-xi School[32] from his teaching. He-ce transmitted to Ru[33] of Ci-zhou.[34] Ru transmitted to

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[24]Hong-ren (601-674).

[25]Fa-rong (594-657).

[26]Hui-neng (638-713).

[27]Shen-xiu (606?-706).

[28]Shen-hui (684-758).

[29]This is problematic, since He-ce Shen-hui was the seventh patriarch in this lineage.

[30]Nan-yue Huai-hai (677-744).

[31]Ma-zu Dao-yi (709-788).

[32]Perhaps this refers to the Hung-zhou lineage, for this is the school with which he was associated.

[33]Zhi-ru (723-811).

[34]In modern He-bei Province.

Zhang[35] of Jing-nan. Zhang transmitted to Yuan[36] of Sui-zhou,[37] who also transmitted to Zhao[38] of the eastern capital.[39] Yuan transmitted to the Great Master [Zong Mi]. The Great Master is the fifth generation from He-ce; from Bodhidharma, he was 11th generation; from Kashyapa, he was the 38th generation. His genealogy in the *dharma* tradition was thus.

The great master's family was eminent. At a young age he was well-versed in the Confucian classics. He wanted to engage in worldly affairs in order to serve living beings.[40] By chance, he called upon [Master Yuan] of Suizhou. [Master Yuan] had not yet spoken with him, when his mind retreated from wandering. His disciples saw that he was dignified-looking as if he were thinking, but he was without thoughts. [His appearance] was clear as if he were enlightened, but he was not enlightened. They joyfully admired him. Subsequently, he took the tonsure and received [Yuan's] teachings.

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[35]Zhang Wei-chong (d.821) was also known as Nan-yin. The controversy over his identity is discussed in *TMSB* pages 35-37.

[36]Dao Yuan, dates unavailable.

[37]In modern Sichuan Province.

[38]Shen Zhao (776-838).

[39]Also known as Lo-yang.

[40]lit. "give life to".

When he completed his training with Dao Yuan, he then called upon [Zhang][41] of Jing-nan. [Zhang] of Jing-nan said,

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"You are one who is fit to transmit the teachings. You should flourish in the imperial capital." Then he called upon Zhao of the eastern capital. Zhao said, "You are like a bodhisattva, [but] who is able to recognize you?" Then he called upon Hua-yan Master Guan[42] of Shang-du.[43] Guan said, "Who else but you is able to follow and roam with me in the Lotus-Womb of Vairocana?"

In his earlier years when he was in Sichuan, he received the scriptures after having purified himself. He received the *Scripture of Complete Enlightenment* in thirteen chapters and deeply penetrated to its true meaning. Then he hastened to transmit the *Scripture of Complete Enlightenment* . At Hanshang, because an ill monk[44] gave him a commentary on the *Huayan Sutra,* and although he had not yet received or heard it before, he expounded upon the Huayan [Sutra]. Henceforth, he composed commentaries to the *Complete*

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[41]Zhang(d.821) is also known as Wei-zhong of Chengdu

[42]Cheng Guan (738-839).

[43]Modern-day Xian in Shaanxi Province.

[44]The ill monk was Ling-feng (d.810). Following this incident, Zong Mi decided that it must have been karmic predestination which permitted Ling-feng to survive long enough to transmit this scripture to him. (*TMSB* 58-59).

Enlightenment, Hua-yan Sutra,[45] *Nirvana Sutra,*[46] *Diamond Sutra,*[47] *Awakening of Faith,*[48] *Consciousness-Only,*[49] *Ullambana,*[50] *Dharmādhatu,*[51] *Contemplation and Action Sutras* and others. He edited the *Fa-yi*[52] and classified both the Ritual and Penitential Texts and the Chart on Cultivating Realizations. Zong Mi also collected the sayings of the various Chan lines of transmission. Making them into a Chan canon, he compiled them and wrote a preface. There was his personal correspondence as well, [which included] *gathas* and discussions. Altogether, [his writings totalled] over ninety *juan*. All his teachings were equally based on one true mind and penetrated all his teachings. Manifesting the true essence, he harmonized practice and theory and was exceptional in his treatment of others. Obscuring the distinction between others and self, he alone moved beyond [this distinction].

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[45]*Avatamsaka Sutra.*

[46]*Da-sheng nie-pan jing.*

[47]*Vajraccedika-prajnaparamita Sutra.*

[48]*Da-sheng qi-xin lun.*

[49]*Cheng wei-shi lun.*

[50]*Yu-lan-pen jing.*

[51]*Hua-yan fa-jie guan men.*

[52]This refers to Zong Mi's *Za-shu zhan-da fa-yi ji* (Collection of Miscellaneous Correspondence on the Meaning of the Dharma).

The critics believe that Master Mi did not maintain Chan practice, but widely lectured upon the *sutras* and *sastras*. He roamed through famous towns and great cities and considered establishing [Buddhism] to be his responsibility.

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Then was he just a slave of a good reputation?[53] Could it possibly be that he had not yet forgotten fame and profit? Alas! How could the critics understand the inclinations of the great Way?

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[53]This sentence and the one which follows both employ a common construction for rhetorical questions. The implied answer is: of course not.

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[56]lit. "never once not been the one mind"

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[58]The tenth patriarch.

[59]Twelfth patriarch and author of numerous Buddhist texts.

[60]Fourteenth patriarch.

[61]Twenty-first patriarch and author of numerous Buddhist texts.

opened up the Mahayana and wrote *sastras* and explained *sutras* in order to annihilate[62] non-Buddhist paths.

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They were the chief Bodhisattva chanters, but the Honorable Jaya alone considered the power of the precepts to be the awe-inspiring and divine. The Honorable Mala considered ascetic practice to be the traces of the Way. As for all the other patriarchs, some widely preached Buddhist teachings. Some concentrated their minds on meditative silence, and some left [this world] through ritual suicide. Some annihilated themselves through self-immolation. Some climbed trees in order to proclaim the end. Some suffered injury to repay their debts. In this then, the *dharma* is always the same, but the practice is not necessarily the same. Moreover, following the traces [of earlier Buddhists] does not constitute good practice. Preserving the rules and regulations[63] does not constitute skillfulness. If it does not hasten, then it is not considered a great ox. If one does not surpass others, then he is not considered a great official. For this reason, the way of our teacher [was thus]: He considered wisdom and insight to be the wonderful gate [of the *dharma*], and tranquility and purity to be the proper tastes [of the *dharma*]; compassion and forbearance to be armor and shields;

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[63]lit. "uncle and ink".

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When he encountered an impoverished person, he shouted at him and sent him to return home. When he saw a poor woman, he shouted at her to look after her home. If the impoverished person did not return home, or the poor woman was not wealthy, then our master was ashamed of it. If the three vehicles[65] did not prosper, or if the four components of consciousness[66] were not restored, then our master was ashamed of this. If loyalty and filial piety were not both transformed, or if in bearing responsibilities one was not competent in one's job,

Page 4A

then our master was ashamed of this. If one fled from fame and obstructed the high ministers or concealed one's increasing pride, then my master was ashamed of this. For this reason, his mind was disturbed in aiding and pulling up [sentient beings] and he was

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[64]*mara*

[65]"The three vehicles or conveyances which carry living beings across *samsara* or mortality to the shores of nirvana" (*SH* 58a).

[66]The four divisions of the mental function of cognition.

concerned about explaining and persuading.[67] He did not exalt himself on the basis of one mode of practice, and he did not consider himself famous on the basis of one form of virtue. If there were those who took refuge in him, he did not wait for them to invite him before he went. If there were those who sought benefit, he did not wait for them to become zealous before he opened things up for them. Although a youth was not simple and honest in his response to his treatment [by Master Mi] and although the stubborn and hateful one was not negligent in his earnest exertion, [Zong Mi] used this to expand the religion and save sentient beings. His help in transforming the state was like this.

For this reason, those who were intimate with the master's teachings [said]: If they were poor, then he gave *(dana)* to them; if they were fierce, then he calmed them; if unyielding, then he made them follow along with things; if disobedient, then he made them obedient; if confused, then he opened up [their ignorance]; if lazy, then he made them diligent; if they glorified themselves, then he made them content; if they relied on themselves, then he transformed them; if they were selfish, then he made them unselfish; if they were drowning in their desires, he made them righteous. In all cases, there were nobles and laypeople who abandoned their households and entered his teaching with their wives and children living in different monasteries. There were those who transformed their occupations, stopped eating meat, maintained the precepts and

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[67]a form of *upaya*

dharma, and brought their families to live nearby. There were those who, leaving, practiced government and ruling principle and considered saving the sick and suffering to be their way. There are those who retired to care for their father and mother and considered rites and paying homage to be proper conduct. The remainder came waveringly and went joyfully. They arrived raising their sleeves

Page 4B

and returned with full bellies. The place was very crowded [such that] it could not be measured, [and included] the bodhisattvas to whom the true Tathagata had entrusted [the *dharma*] and the good friends whom the living beings did not invite. Weren't there also the people of the four necessities?[68] And surely there were the practitioners of the ten stages?[69] I do not know the breadth or depth of their realms and courtyards. How could the critics also know the inclinations of the great way?

The great master was born into the world in the first year of the Jian-zhong reign period (780 C.E.). In the second year of Yuan-he (807), his mind was sealed by the Buddhist monk Dao Yuan. He also received the commandments from Vinaya Master Zheng. In the second year of Da-he at the Qing-cheng festival he was requested to enter the inner palace where [the emperor] questioned him on the

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[68]The four necessities for religious practitioners fall into two categories: those for ascetic practitioners and those of the *dharma*.

[69]A segment of the fifty-two stages in the development of a bodhisattva into a Buddha.

essentials of the *dharma* and bestowed upon him the purple square robe, making him "Most Virtuous". Then he requested to return to the mountains.[70]

On the sixth day of the first month of the first year of Hui-chang[71] (841 C.E.), he died in meditation at the Monastery of the Pagoda of the Arising of Blessings.[72] His appearance was just as if he were alive and his countenence was even more joyful. After the seventh day, he was moved to a coffin. The strength of his self realization was evident. On the twenty-second day of the same month, monks, laypeople, and others escorted his whole body to Guifeng. On the thirteenth day of the second month, he was cremated and they obtained several dozen[73] relics. These shone with a white light and glistened brightly. Afterwards, the disciples tearfully searched among all the ashes, and when they had retrieved all of the relics, they returned.

Page 5A

Having collected all of them, they stored them in a stone building. His compassion for those with whom he had no karmic connection was evident. His common age was sixty-two, but he had

[70]i.e., return to his monastery.

[71]The Hui-chang reign period lasted from 841 to 847.

[72]Located in Chang-an.

[73]lit. "several tens".

been a monk for thirty-four years. His dying commands were deeply enlightened. Although his body did not last long, his true spirit will last for eternal *kalpas*. Because it will be preserved for a long time, it will be known. What transforms is impermanent; what was preserved is this.

"After my death, they should raise up my body and give it to the insects and dogs. Having burned my bones, they should scatter them, and not entomb them nor house them in a stupa. They should not feel sad and yearn for me so as to disrupt their meditation and contemplation. At each Qing-ming festival they shall ascend the mountain, where, after preaching the way for seven days, they should then depart. In all my other activities as abbot there were proper models of deportment. Thus, those who oppose them are not my disciples."

Now the emperor twice expanded the true school and canonized him as "Meditation and Wisdom Chan Master" and The Blue Lotus Stupa. Consequently, the stupa had to be built and the stone tablet had to be carved. Moreover, he caused the master's teachings to themselves be made into a school, and scholars had admiration for what he published. The disciples who carried out [his teachings] were very numerous and all understood.

Having understood, the Tathagata skillfully expounded the essentials of the *dharma*. Some settled their thoughts by dwelling in cliffs and caves. Some transmitted the teachings while dwelling in

the capital. Some cut off their own arms[74] in order to repay [his] kindness [in preaching the Buddhist teaching]. Some wore white robes in order to wash away traces [of sin]. The rest awakened to the Way after one ceremony.

Page 5B

There were several thousands of monks, nuns, and the four classes *(varga)* who maintained and preserved [the precepts] to the end of their life who became members of his [*dharma*] clan. His way and practice were transmitted to later generations and recorded by the unofficial biographer Pei.

The great master took the *dharma* as his elder brother, took righteousness as his friend, took benevolence as skillfulness and knowledge, and took the teachings as his inner and outer protection. Therefore, after getting the particulars, I gathered them together. Other people did not examine them closely. The inscription says:

The Tathagata knew and saw the fundamental causes underlying great events. From patriarch to patriarch [this teaching] has been transmitted, and the lamp has been lit from lamp to lamp, as its brilliance has been apportioned. Moreover, it illuminates, makes manifest, and explains the esoteric transmission; destroys the heterodox and crushes the demons, as well as enlightened the sages and the worthy. Those who make it gradual, enter; those who make

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[74]In addition to the famous story of Hui-ke, there was also an incident in Zong-mi's life when the monk Tai-gong cut off his own arm after being inspired by the master's lecture. (See *TMSB* 60)

it sudden, are complete. Who hands it down? Who promotes it? Gui-feng lives in it. He was very compassionate and merciful and did not abandon courtesy while guiding or assisting them. He feared deluding or upsetting [people]. He directly pointed to the tradition of the mind and relied on spreading the bamboo trap of righteousness. He broadly gathered together those who were distant and received them without rejecting or renouncing them. [The Master was like] a strong fortress of defence in the realms of Maras. [He has] exterminated completely the weeds and bushes in the field of desires, thus the great Way would ride smoothly.[75] He was content that his merit was high. At the awakening place, the assembly flourishes. The *dharma* mat resides in mud like the blue lotus without being soiled. Its nature lacks going or coming. There are cycles of promotion and transformation. Following the ways of the world, he sighed. Living beings are pitiable.

Page 6A

Wind blows over the morning field. A bell breaks the evening river. Abandoning the raft, he has left and gone away. Who will rush to save the drowning ones? The cliffs are steep and dangerous with their thorny bushes. Who will help the stumbling ones with his broad shoulders? As [the Master] has gone away with his light boat,

[75]I am indebted to Professor Jan Yun-hua for his assistance with the previous two sentences.

the extreme compassion is no more, and who should be able to rush the last one into the front?[76]

As for my master, in what place will he again establish the withered boat [the Buddhist teaching?] The *dharma* points to one spirit. Of the disciples, there remain three thousand who have not turned their back on his *dharma*. His compassion will forever continue.

[Untranslatable mutilated text]

Line 7

A petition to the throne requesting a stupa designation and a posthumous title on the same day. Established on the 13th day of the 10th month of Tai-zhong 9 (847 C.E.). It was established and engraved on a jade tablet by Guan Shao, who originally engraved the words:

Epitaph of the esteemed Master of Gui-feng; composed and written by the Tang Minister Pei Xiu. His phraseology and historical references were not sufficiently selected,

Page 6A

but his calligraphy was esteemed by the whole world. Therefore, the inscription says:

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[76]I am indebted to Professor Jan Yun-hua for his assistance with the previous paragraph.

The Chan Master Zong Mi of Gui-feng, of the *dharma*-gate dragon-elephant[77] rank in order to increase his roaming about to expand and continue his teachings. At one time, he was unable to lack doubts. As for the main ideas of Hui-neng and Bodhidharma, only Prime Minister Pei Xiu was able to understand them. Thus, having put together one thousand words, he clarified them and also repeated them. Those who have attained realization by relying on their own mind act for the *dharma*. Those who give rise [to faith] through following their desires act for practice. When in practice, there were different methods, then [for every] one, he used four phrases to exhaust it. At this time, Mr. Liu Cheng-xuan used it for the title of a book. The whole world scarcely makes use of it. Inscribed in seal script, he wrote it himself. Scholars want to be as effective as Mi. His writing style was also pure and vigorous. Xiao Sa-da attained the Director of the Watch calligraphic style. Pei was able to understand Mi. For the sake of the four classes *(varga)* and the people of the ten stages,[78] he treated himself in the same manner [as he treated others]. Also, he did not die far away. Afterwards, it was made by Tian Wang-zi, who wrote his surname and personal name on the back. How could it be said that he was not yet able to depart from the cycle of *samsara*? Still, he was also called one who

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[77]A term of respect for a monk which may also refer to great saints, Buddhas, or bodhisattvas (*SH* 455).

[78]"The ten stages in the fifty-two sections of the development of a bodhisattva into a Buddha" (*SH* 47).

appears through following his desires. It is recorded in this volume and substantiated by a venerable scholar.

Page 7A--Contains no relevant information. It talks about Pei-Xiu's writings and a certain Master Yan.

Page 7B Line10

From Kashyapa to Bodhidharma there were twenty-eight generations. Bodhidharma transmitted to Ke. Ke transmitted to Can. Can transmitted to Xin. Xin transmitted to Ren, who was the Fifth Patriarch.

Page 8A

Ren transmitted to [Hui-] Neng, who was the Sixth Patriarch. Ke was known as Hui-ke; Xin was known as Dao-xin. Ren was known as Hong-ren. Hong-ren and Dao-xin both resided in the East Mountain Monastery at Double-peak Mountain in Jin-zhou. Therefore, his teaching is called the East Mountain *dharma* gate. Zan-ning's biography of famous monks said that in Hong-ren's seventh year he arrived at Double-peak, where Dao-xin secretly entrusted to him the *dharma*-robe and designated him "You are the one who will create the East Mountain *Dharma* gate." The Sixth Patriarch originally resided at Bao-lin Monastery and afterwards Prefect Xin Ju ordered him to leave Great Pure Monastery. He left and went to Double-peak Cao-hou Stream. Therefore, during the time of the Sixth Patriarch, he

was also designated the Double-peak monk. This is what is called the Cao-qi School. Hong-ren immediately transmitted to Neng, who founded the Southern School; and he also transmitted to Xiu, who founded the Northern School. Furthermore, their disciples each considered their own teacher to be the sixth patriarch. Together, Shen-xiu's disciples quietly made him the seventh patriarch. The epitaph of the Greatly Enlightened Chan Master Wang Jin describes the history of the Bodhidharma transmission down to Da-tong. Da-tong transmitted to Da-chao. Da-tong was Xiu. Da-chao was Ji. Later, the school of Hui-neng declined, while the school of Shen-xiu flourished. Only Shen-hui himself acted as a senior disciple from the school of Hui-neng, entered the eastern capital, and confronted the Northern School directly.

Page 8B

The epitaph of the Third Patriarch written by Du-gu Ji states: "The Sudden School of Cao-qi remained lonely at Ling-nan, whereas Master Xiu and his disciples became the masters in the two capitals. They were the personal teachers to the three emperors, had their chairs bestowed by the thrones, and their lectures were attended by the empresses and royal ladies.[79] Only Hui of He-ce brought about the gate of universal tranquility. Filling up, it then reverted to emptiness. Such is the reputation of the school of the patriarch Neng.

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[79]I am indebted to Professor Jan Yun-hua for his assistance with the previous sentences.

Those who were not roused to action took this Xiu school to be flourishing in Kai-yuan (713 C.E.), but Hui was then restored during Tian-bao (742 C.E.). In the 12th year of Zheng Yuan (785 C.E.) an imperial decree considered Hui to be the seventh patriarch. Consequently, the Northern School lacked reknown from then on. Hui was also called Shen-hui. Ru was known as Fa-ru. Ru's disciple was Wei-zhong. Wei-zhong was also known as Zhang of Jing-nan. The writings also say, "In the beginning, the master visited Ji of Sui-zhou. He had an audience with Jing-nan [Zhang]. He visited Dong-jing. Afterwards, he visited Guan of Hua-yan. Guan was known as Cheng-guan. During the Tang, he was called Imperial Preceptor Qing-jing.

In the beginning of the twelfth year of our Yong-zheng,[80] he was specially honored as the Chan Master of the Wonderfully Correct and True Vehicle. The master originally was not acquainted with [Cheng] Guan.

Afterwards, he sent someone carrying a letter [to Master Guan] in which he expressed his willingness to become a disciple. Guan replied and his letter said, "Bo Ya stopped to play his stringed instrument [in memory of his old friend];

Page 9A

[80]Reign title of the Qing dynasty.

Zhong-ni[81] stopped his carriage to speak to a new acquaintance. Even more so, you have now communicated your understanding which is identical to my thoughts." The preface which Zong Mi wrote to his discussion of the *Yuan-jue Jing* says, "I am greatly indebted to you for accepting me as the bearer of the seal of the True One, although I am not really worthy of this." This is the reference which was recorded in his preface to the *Yuan Jue Jing Commentary*. Pei Xiu composed a preface to Zong Mi's *Yuan-jue Jing Commentary* in which he has written a biography of the master (which is very similar to this work).

The *dharma*-tablet of the biography of Gui-feng Meditation and Wisdom Chan Master. As for the Chan school, from Shen-xiu and Hui-neng it divided into the two Southern and Northern branches, but the teachings of Cao-qi were only cultivated outside Ling-nan. Not until the time that He-ce Hui publicly expounded the *dharma* at the western capital did the Southern School begin to flourish. He-ce transmitted to Ru of Ci-zhou. Ru transmitted to Zhang of Jing-nan. Zhang transmitted to Yuan of Sui-zhou. Yuan transmitted to Zong-mi. Mi also received the commentary by Hua-yan Master Cheng-guan of Shang-du and loved it. Consequently, he also circulated Chan teachings for the sake of humans and devas. The writings of the master [include] the *Collected Writings on the Source of Chan*, his commentary of the *Awakening of Faith*, his sub-commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity*, and the

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[81]style name of Confucius, who was the second son.

great and small commentaries on the *Yuan-jue Jing*. All were recorded in the *Tang Shu* and *Yi-wen Zhi*.

Page 9B

As for Gui Peak, the epitaph describes the transmission of the Sixth Patriarch. Only the two schools of He-ce and Jiang-xi did not deal with Qing-yuan,[82] which was probably because at his time the study of Qing-yuan was still not greatly practiced. Afterwards, the *dharma*-eye of Cao-dong and Yun-men[83] appeared, but then the Honorable Qing-yuan joined together with Bing of Nan-yue and He-ce for the sake of the flourishing and decline of side branches of Buddhist monks. There were also many dozens of them. It says, "Myriad practices are always of one mind. One mind never opposes the myriad practices or the myriad divisions of the Lian Xi[84] one reality *(bhutatathata)*." This is rather similar to the theories that the myriad are becoming unified.

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[82]Qing-yuan Xing-si (d.740)

[83]These are two of the "five houses" of Chan during the Song period. The Cao-dong school (Japanese *Sôtô*) is traced back to Qing-yuan.

[84]A river in Hunan Province.

Jing De Chuan Deng Lu (T. 2076 p. 305)

The Chan Master Zong Mi of Gui-feng in the Zhong-nan Mountains, the *dharma*-inheritor of the former Chan Master Dao Yuan of Sui-zhou, was from Xi-chong in Guo-zhou. His surname was He and his family was eminent and prosperous. At a young age, he was well-versed in the Confucian books. At the age of capping,[1] he had a deep knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures. In the second year of Yuan-he reign period of the Tang dynasty (808 C.E.), he was about to go to offer tribute, when he encountered and advanced to the *dharma*-mat of the monk [Dao-] Yuan and joyfully united in the middle path.[2] He subsequently sought to don [Buddhist robes] and cut [his hair]. In the same year, he advanced to full ordination. One day, he participated in the *sangha* purification at Fu-li he received consecration and held a lower position in the assembly. Next, he received the *Yuan-jue Jing* scripture in twelve chapters. He had not yet finished viewing the scroll when he was moved to awakening and tears flowed.

He pledged himself *(gui)* to the purport of that [text] by means of which he became enlightened and told this to Yuan. Yuan comforted him, saying, "You should widely proclaim the complete

[1]At about twenty years of age.

[2]i.e., converted to Buddhism(*SH* 299b).

and immediate teachings.[3] As for this [teaching], all the Buddhas confer it upon you alone." In his practice, he did not stagnate in one corner. The master departed after tearfully receiving the sacred orders and performing the proper rituals. Then he called upon Chan Master Zhang *(a.k.a. Nan-yin)* of Jing-nan. Zhang said, "You are one who will transmit the teachings. You ought to preach at the imperial capital."

Line 10 (305c)

He again visited Chan Master Zhao of the Eastern Capital.[4] *{Supporter of the state Chan Master Zhao}* Zhao said, "You are a bodhisattva, but who can recognize you?"

He then reached Xiang[-yang] Han[-shang], where, due to an ill monk[5] entrusted him with the Hua-yan commentary written by the great master Cheng Guan of Shang-du,[6] Master Mi was able to expound upon it after only one glance at it, although he had not yet heard it or studied it. He himself was joyful at the encounter, saying, "In the past, although all the masters composed writings, few

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[3]This refers to the current debate over sudden versus gradual enlightenment. Master Yuan is here advocating sudden ("immediate") enlightenment.

[4]Lo-yang

[5]The ill monk was Ling-feng (d.810). Following this incident, Zong Mi decided that it must have been karmic predestination which permitted Ling-feng to survive long enough to transmit this scripture to him.

[6]Modern-day Xian in Shaanxi Province.

exhausted their meaning. None of them have been equal to the flowing stream of the phrases of this commentary, which is free, profound, mysterious, and warm [in its style]. In my [study of] Chan, [I] encountered the teachings of the Southern School and happened upon the *Yuan Jue Jing*. After one word, my Mind[7] opened up and became clear. Within one scroll, all bodhisattvas above the ten stages were clear and bright. But now, I have further unexpectedly learned this exceptional writing completely by heart." He then expounded upon the whole thing and turned his attention to visiting the master [who had written the] commentary.

At that time, a disciple of his school, Tai-gong, cut off his arm to repay [the master's] compassion. The master sent a letter early on to the master [who had written the] commentary to converse with him at a distance. [Cheng Guan] assisted him and sent a reply with his consolation. He inquired as to whether Tai-gong's wound had healed. Just then, the attendants arrived at Shang-du and [Zong Mi] carried out the rituals incumbent on a disciple. Guan said, "Who else but you is able to follow me in roaming about the Lotus Womb of Vairocana?"

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The master travelled to Guan's home. Although he daily renewed his virtue, he still recognized that the evil of the bamboo fish-trap grasping at the elephant eternally decays. In the north he roamed

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[7]The mental ground or conditions from which all things spring (*SH* 150a).

about the Qing-liang Mountain[8] and returned to reside at the Grass Hut Monastery in Hu-xian.[9] After a short time, he again entered the monastery at the southern Gui-feng hermitage. In the Tai-he reign period (827-836), he was summoned to enter the inner [palace] where [the emperor] bestowed the purple robe upon him.[10] The emperor repeatedly questioned him on the essentials of the *dharma*. The court *(chao-shi)* gave him their admiration. Only Prime Minister Pei Xiu deeply entered the advanced stages of learning. He received the [master's] teachings and became a lay assistant. The master considered the scholars of Chan teaching to be slandering each other. Thereupon, he set forth in writing the *Writings on the Source of Chan*, in which he wrote an account of the doctrines of all the houses [branches of Chan]. He made manifest and explained the basic principles of the Chan schools. He collected letters, phrases, and *gathas* and made them into a single collection (some say 100 *zhuan*) in order to pass it down to later generations.

The outline of his entire *Chan Preface* says: Chan is an Indian word. Its complete name is Chan-na [*dhyana*]. In translation it is called the cultivation of discriminating thought. It is also called quiet contemplation.

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[8]This refers to Wu-tai Shan.

[9]In Shensi Province.

[10]In the *SKSC* text, this event occurs in the second year of this reign period.

Line 10 (306a)

All of these are general terms for Meditation *(samadhi)* and Wisdom. The source is the fundamentally enlightened *(bodhi)* true nature of all living beings, which is also known as the Buddha-nature or Mind. Awakening to it is called wisdom; cultivating it is called meditation *(samadhi)*. The encompassing name for meditation and wisdom is Chan. This nature is the original source of Chan. Therefore it is called the source of Chan, which is also known as Chan-na [*dhyana*]. As for principles and practice, the original source of these are Chan principles. Forgetting desires and cutting them off is Chan practice. Therefore it is called principles and practice, but what I have collected now is the writings of all the houses. Many boast of Chan principles, but few expound Chan practice. Therefore, they can still refer to the *Chan Source*. At the present time, there are those who only see true nature as Chan and do not understand the purpose of principles or practice and furthermore do not distinguish the sound of *hua* (China) and *zhu* (India). However, it is not that there is a Chan body separate from the true nature. However, if living beings confuse the truth and unite with dust, then they are called scattered and chaotic. If they disavow dust and unite with the truth, then they are said to be in Chan meditation *(samadhi)*. If one honestly discusses fundamental nature, since there is neither true nor false, neither disavowal nor unity, neither *samadhi* nor chaos, [then] who speaks of Chan?

Line 20 (306a)

Moreover, this true nature is not only the source of the Chan school but is also the source of the myriad *dharmas*. Therefore, it is called the *Dharma*-nature, which is also the source of living beings' confusion and awakening. Therefore, it is called the *Tathagatagarbha-alayavijnana*[11] *{from the Lankavatara-sutra}*, which is also the source of all Buddhas' myriad virtues. Therefore it is called Buddha-nature *{Nirvana Sutra and others}*, which is also the source of the myriad practices of the Bodhisattva. Therefore, it is called Mind. *{The Brahmajala-sutra chapter of the dharma gate of Mind says: this is the fundamental source of all Buddhas. It is the root source of practicing the Bodhisattva Way and is the root source of the great assembly of all the Buddha's descendants (fo-zi).}* The myriad practices are none other than the six *paramitas*. The Chan school is only one among the six; it is actually number five. How can everyone look at true nature as only one [form of] Chan practice? Nevertheless, the practice of *samadhi* is the most wondrous. It is able to open up the nature so that it ascends to passionless wisdom. It is the cause of all subtle usages, myriad practices, and myriad virtues*(de)* and the perfection of the radiance and brilliance of the supernatural powers of a Buddha which arise from it. People who study the three vehicles[12] and want to seek the holy way must

[11]The "womb of the Tathagata", and the "storehouse of all knowledge"`.

[12]The way of the *Sravaka, Pratyeka-buddha*, and the *Mahayana*. The first two are categorized as part of the lesser vehicle.

practice meditation. Those who depart from here have no gate, and those who depart from here have no path.

Page 306b

As for intoning the name of the Buddha to seek rebirth in the Pure Land, they must also cultivate the sixteen forms of contemplation and meditation, the *samadhi* of intoning the name of the Buddha, and also the *bo-zhou samadhi*.[13] Furthermore, the true nature is neither impure nor pure, and initially the mundane and holy are not different. As for meditation, there is the shallowness and the depth, and different stages. Those who cultivate while speaking of employing a different plan and liking what is superior and disliking what is inferior, [practice] non-Buddhist meditation. Those who cultivate while having proper faith in causes and effects *(karma)* [but] also employ likes and dislikes, [practice] ordinary meditation. Those who cultivate while merely apprehending the partial truth of the emptiness of self, [practice] *Hinayana* meditation. Those who cultivate while apprehending the truth that is made manifest by the emptiness of self and *dharmas*, [practice] *Mahayana* meditation. *{In the above four higher classes there are differences in the four forms (se) and the four voids (kong).}* If those who suddenly awaken to [the potential of] their own minds are fundamentally pure and clean and fundamentally lack afflictions, then their passionless wisdom

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[13]The *samadhi* in which the Buddhas of the ten directions are seen as clearly as the stars at night (*SH* 337b).

and nature are fundamentally completed of their own accord. This mind is in fact Buddha-mind and is ultimately not different. Those who cultivate while relying on this mind, [practice] the highest vehicle meditation, which is also called the pure meditation of the Tathagata,

Line 10 (306b)

and also called the *samadhi* for realizing that the nature of all Buddhas is the same, and also called the *samadhi* of true thusness.[14] This is the root of all *samadhi*. If one is able to cultivate and practice with every thought, [then] one will naturally and gradually attain the myriad forms of *samadhi*. That which Bodhidharma's pupils expanded and handed down from one to the next is this [highest form of] Chan. Before Bodhidharma arrived, what all the oldest houses of Buddhism expounded was the eight degrees of fixed abstraction[15] which correspond to the previous four *dhyana* heavens. All eminent monks cultivate these, from which they all attain beneficial results. Nan-yue (677-744) and Tian-tai Zhi-yi ordered reliance on the principle of the three dogmas[16] and cultivation of the three insights into the three methods of attaining

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[14]The *samadhi* in which all phenomena are eliminated and the absolute is realized.

[15]"[T]he four *dhyanas* corresponding to the four divisions in the heavens of form, and the four degrees of absolute fixed abstraction on [emptiness], corresponding to the heavens of formlessness" (*SH* 36a).

[16]Derived from the Tian-tai school.

abstraction. Although the meaning of the doctrine is most complete and marvelous,[17] it still enters the doors by stages and was merely a form of previous Chan practice. As for what was transmitted only by Bodhidharma, sudden enlightenment instantly accorded with the Buddha-body. This was vastly different from other schools. Therefore, it has been difficult for traditional practitioners to understand its meaning. Those who attain it immediately become sages and urgently verify *bodhi*. Those who neglect it become heretics and speedily enter mud and coals. This is why former patriarchs removed ignorance and guarded against errors. Moreover, since it has been transmitted from one person to another, it is the cause by which later generations have something to rely on; therefore, they employed 1000 lamps. The reason why there are so many people in error is because the lamps [of the teachings] had been transmitted for many generations so that after a long time, the *dharma* became corrupt.

Line 20 (306b)

There are also a multitude of students of the *sutras* and *sastras* who doubt and revile [the Chanists]. Originally, the Buddha expounded the sudden teaching and the gradual teaching. Chan opened up the sudden gate and the gradual gate. The two teachings and the two gates complemented each other, but now, those who discourse [on the *sutras*] are partial towards displaying the gradual meaning, while

[17]This may also refer to "the mystery of a 'perfect' school" (*SH* 396b).

those who engage in meditation incline towards making the sudden school known. When meditators and lecturers meet, the division between them is far apart.[18] I, Zong Mi, did not understand what they had done in previous lives to influence them to have this sort of mind. Without being liberated [themselves], they desired to release others from their bonds. For the sake of the *dharma*, they gave up their own bodily life in sympathy for people being caught up in bonds. (Also like pure name said: If one himself had bonds, [then] he was able to free other's bonds, which did not did not exist in this place. He still wanted to finish [but] was not able. He verified that old practices are difficult to change.) I constantly sigh in regret that joining the *dharma* and separating from the *dharma* is a human sickness. Therefore, in addition, I composed *sutras, Vinaya, sastras*, or commentaries, to greatly open up the gate of precepts, meditation, and wisdom. I clarified the point that sudden awakening is assisted by gradual cultivation. I realized that what the masters expounded was in accord with the Buddha's message [The Buddha's] meaning was truly made known from the beginning to the end [of the canon],[19] but the Buddhist writings are vast, extensive, and difficult to seek. Although there are many vehicles for extensive study, those who are determined are few. As for tracks and traces, names and form,

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[18]i.e., referring to the sudden and gradual traditions.

[19]Broughton 99.

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who can distinguish the gold from the ore?[20] Even while disciples exhaust themselves with labor, they have not yet seen the potentiality and response of all to become a Buddha.[21] Although the Buddha expounded on compassion and increased such conduct, I still worried about desire and perceived that it was difficult to guard against. Consequently, I renounced the assembly and entered the mountains to practice both meditation and wisdom. I ceased worrying about the past and future and continued for a period of ten years. *{say those who came before and after. Within this period, he received orders to follow and enter the inner [palace]. He resided in the capital for two years. Then he withdrew and requested to return to his monastery.}* Through very detailed practice, the rise and fall of passions are made manifest in calm wisdom. I understood that the arrangement and meaning of the *dharmas* are manifested by the empty mind. The sun's rays shining through the empty cracks agitate the fine dust, while at the bottom of the pure, deep water, the image is bright and clear. How could this possibly be compared with the unenlightened Chan which vainly preserves its silence. As for the foolish wisdom of seeking only after writings,[22] it is the basis upon which the root cause distinguishes all the teachings after

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[20]i.e., the refined from the coarse.

[21](*SH* 448a).

[22]i.e., those who only read *sutras* while failing to practice meditation.

having thoroughly understood its own mind. The earnestness and sincerity of the intuitive school (Chan) are the reason why the cause furthermore liberates and cultivates the mind after having distinguished all the teachings. The teaching of sincerity and devotion in the doctrine is what all Buddhist bodhisattvas handed down as *sutras* and *sastras*. His meditative teaching is what the various good and wise ones set forth as phrases and *gathas*.

Line 10 (306c)

Only Buddhist *sutras* open up and spread out over the assembly of many thousands and the eight classes of supernatural beings. The Chan *gathas* which he gathered together and arranged became the basis of one type in this corner. The vast teaching for the multitudes then made it difficult to rely on the wild and dissolute. With regard to the basis [the Chan verses he gathered together], he pointed out that it was easy to employ. The intention of his present collection lies in these [two points].

Pei Xiu wrote a preface for it which said, "Among all the disciples of Chan there are people who penetrate [to the true meaning], but how is each one's practice? Those who thoroughly understand it are few, while those who distort it are many. Within several decades, the master's teachings increasingly deteriorated. Relying on one's natural endowment as the door and window,[23] each person can open up and expand [the *dharma*] on their own, whereas

[23]A metaphor for schools or sects.

sutras and *sastras* are shields and weapons with which to attack and beat one other. Passions change and transform in accord with armor and arrows. *(Zhou rites say: Armor-makers make shields. Meng-zi says: How could arrow-makers not bear a grudge towards armor-makers? Armor-makers only fear hurting people. Arrow-makers only fear not hurting people. The art which they practice probably causes this. Present-day scholars only follow their own traditions and so deny each other.}* The *dharma* rejects other and self on the basis of high or low status. Though they grasp affirmation and denial in a disorganized fashion, none is able to clearly distinguish them, thus, in the past, the World-Honored One and bodhisattvas all instructed with various methods, which was sufficient to give rise to disputes. Later people increased the illness of afflictions. What benefit is there in this? The great master of Gui Mountain after a long time sighed and said,

Line 20 (306c)

I have decided that I cannot remain silent. Thereupon, I relied upon the doctrine of the Tathagata's three categories and approved the *dharma*-gates of the Chan School's three categories. If one melts down the vase, plate, hairpin, and bracelet, then they become one [piece of] gold. If one stirs together kumiss[24] and ghee,[25] then they become one flavor. Those who raise it up after restoring the outline

[24]A Central Asian milk product.

[25]Clarified butter.

all comply. *{Xun Zi said: It is like seizing the collar of a fur garment by bending the five fingers, but those who go along with it are beyond counting.}* Those who come, bringing together the essentials, have the same inclination. *{The outline of the Zhou Changes says: All the prefaces lay hold of the perfect teaching in order to seal all the schools. Although the hundred houses also lack that in which they are not united.}* He was still afraid that scholars might find it difficult to understand, and then further, they directly revealed the roots and branches of the school's source; the harmonizing of the true and false; the hiddenness and manifestations of *sunyata*;[26] the distinctions of doctrine; the similarities and differences of the sudden and gradual; the complementary cycles of concealing and revealing; the depth and shallowness of the temporal and real; the affirmation and denial of pervading and uniting. Those who are like my master, who upheld the Buddha-sun [which drives away the darkness of ignorance] and sought every possible way to return the light to get rid of all doubt. In accord with the Buddha's intentions, he extended vast compassion-- the benefits of which will be received throughout inexhaustible *kalpas*.

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Then The World-Honored [One] was lord of the Expanded School. My master was a man who gathered together these teachings. The roots and branches complement each other and the

[26]The nature of the void.

Way and what is near at hand illuminate each other. One may say that he completed in one generation the useful application of the teaching. *{From [the time] the World-Honored One expounded the teachings until today, he accumulated and circulated it. His special skills were just then completed.}* Some say, "From [the time of] the Tathagata, this had never been circulated at the capital. Now he suddenly opposes the school's traditions and does not maintain them. He destroyed the barriers and did not occupy them; is this not a perverse and hidden [approach] to matching with the Way in secret?"

I respond: Although in the beginning the Tathagata separately expounded three separate vehicles, he later caused [all three] to interpenetrate. *{Before he was thirty, perhaps he expounded the lesser vehicle, the teaching of emptiness, and the teaching of form; some expounded the teaching of the Buddha-nature. Those who heard each followed their fundamental nature to attain realization and awakening and did not have the same understanding. After forty years in seated meditation at Spiritual Vulture Peak, he expounded the three vehicles. He reached the door of freedom and manifested the one nature. This is the pattern of the progression of his teaching.}* Therefore, in the *Nirvana Sutra* the Bodhisattva Kashyapa says, "All the Buddhas possess esoteric expressions but lack an esoteric canon." The World-Honored [One] praised him, saying, "The words of the Tathagata open up and reveal; they are pure and clean without concealing. Ignorant people who are not liberated call it a secret canon.

<u>**Line 10 (307a)**</u>

Those who are wise understand it completely and thus do not call it hidden." This is his realization. Therefore, if the way of the kings prospers, then the outer doors are not closed, and it is maintained even among the barbarians.[27] If the way of the Buddha is completed, then all *dharmas* are completely under control *(dharani)* and are protective barriers against outside demons. *{The perfect teaching of the <u>Nirvana Sutra</u> unites all <u>dharmas</u> and only differentiates demonic theories and non-Buddhist heterodox schools.}* One should not cling to emotions or bare one's arms among them. *{The master also wrote the two great and small commentaries on the <u>Yuan-Jue Jing</u>, and a treatise on the <u>Fa-jie Guan-men</u>, <u>Treatise on the Origin of Humanity</u>. Pei Xiu wrote prefaces for all of them, and they have flourished and been practiced in the world.}* On the sixth day of the first month of the first year of Hui-chang (841CE), the master died in seated meditation at the Monastery of the Arising of Blessings Pagoda. On the twenty-second day, monks, lay people and others raised up his whole body [and carried it to] Gui Peak. On the twelfth day of the second month he was cremated and they obtained relics which shone with a white light and glistened greatly. Afterwards, the disciples tearfully searched for them and retrieved all of them from the ashes. Then they stored them in a stone building. His common age was sixty-two *sui* and his monastic age

[27]lit. "among the Rong and Yi".

was thirty-four. His dying commands [to his disciples] were: "Raise up my body and give it *(dana)* to the birds and beasts. Having burned my bones, you should scatter them. You should not feel sad and yearn for me so as to disrupt your meditation and contemplation. At each Qing-ming festival you shall ascend the mountain, where you should preach the Way for seven days."

Line 20 (307a)

The abbot's additional dying commands were, "You should remain in accord with the *Vinaya* regulations. Those who oppose them are not my disciples." Those among the four classes (of laymen, laywomen, monks, and nuns) who upheld the three years of mourning [for him] numbered several thousands; they mourned, cried and clamored wildly. When Xuan Zong (r.846-859) again advanced the true teaching, he gave Zong Mi the posthumous title "Chan Master of Meditation *(samadhi)* and Wisdom" and his *stupa* was called "Blue Lotus". The young gentleman, Xiao Mian,[28] petitioned [Zong Mi] for his opinion and requested the Chan master's annotation and explanation, saying, "He-ce says, 'One should see the pure and clean body in all *samadhi* and the 84,000 [atoms which constitute the human body] as the gate of all *paramitas*..' All [of these], by

[28]Zong Mi wrote a response to the questions which Xiao Mian submitted to him.

perceiving the superior, at one time produce function. This is called the Wisdom Eye,[29]

Line 25 (307a)

which is equal to the moment of the *Bhutatathata*[30] response." *{Do not think about good and bad. Do not think about emptiness.}* The myriad transformations are all extinguished. *{The myriad dharmas all follow thoughts; they are produced from the mind. All are empty. Therefore, one calls them transformations. If one thought is not produced, then the myriad dharmas do not arise. Therefore, they do not await to destroy them, [but] let them extinguish themselves.}* At this time, [the myriad transformations] also lack objects of perception. *{Illuminate the body so that it stands alone. Dreams and wisdom forget their ranks.}* *Samadhi* and all *paramita* gates are also at one time empty and calm, and furthermore obtained nothing. *{Confusion may be compared with samadhi. This shore may be compared with the other shore (nirvana). This is an explanation [based on] opposition and contrast If one knows that the mind lacks thoughts and sees that the nature does not arise, then confusion, stillness, falsehood, and truth are at one moment made empty and calm. Therefore they lack objects of desire.}* Not examining this is perceiving superior and

[29]The Wisdom Eye sees all things as unreal, or empty. (*SH* 434a)

[30]True reality.

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at one moment giving rise to function? *{Thus, if one sees nature is complete and bright, and orders and cuts off mutual entanglements, then one can cut off forms, which is a wondrous function. Residing in form is grasping at passions. At the 8,000 dharma gates, one and one are all thus. One dharma exists and becomes one mote of dust. One dharma is empty and becomes one function. Therefore, one says, "If one sees the pure and clean body, then at one moment this produces function."}*

After longing for this, I showed Mian Zhuang the reply to a set of ten questions submitted by Shi Shan-ren. *{Each question and response is one book, but now they have been combined.}*

The first question was: What is the Way? How does one attain it through active cultivation? Is it necessary to cultivate it completely, or does it not rely on meritorious actions?

My response is: Lacking hindrances is the Way. Perceiving falsehood is cultivation. Although the Way is fundamentally perfect *(yuan)*, falsehoods arise and become bonds. When all false thoughts are exhausted, then cultivation is complete.

The second question is: If the Way is attained by relying on cultivation, then this is artificial. In that case, it is the same as worldly *dharmas*, which are empty, false, and insubstantial. Thus, if it decays after it is attained, how could this be called leaving the world?

My response is: Artificiality is *karma* resulting from the bondage to passions, which is called an empty and false world. Non-creating is cultivation and practice, which is truly leaving the world.

The third question is: As for the [practice] which one cultivates, should it be sudden or gradual? If it is the gradual [approach to enlightenment], then one may forget the former and neglect the latter.

Line 10 (307b)

How can one achieve completion [i.e., enlightenment] by means of combining them together? If it is sudden, then there are myriad practices and many methods. Surely it is not possible to attain perfection and completion in an instant!

My response is: The true principle is in fact suddenly perfected after awakening. False passions are gradually exhausted after one stops them. Sudden completion is like first giving birth to a child. After one day, its body is already complete. Gradual cultivation is like the long period of raising the child to adulthood. Only after many years have passed is its intention established.

The fourth question is: In general, as for the methods of cultivating the mind-ground, are they just awakening the mind so that everything becomes clear, or are there just different gates of practice? If there are different gates of practice, what do we call the Southern School's aim of immediate enlightenment? If our

awakening is precisely the same as all the Buddhas', why do we not produce brilliant light such as the gods emanate?

My response is: Do you recognize that the frozen pond is at the same time completely water? It requires the male element in nature *(yang)* to fuse and melt. Through awakening, an ordinary person is perfected. One practices good conduct by relying on the power of the *dharma*. The water flows and glistens when the ice melts. At that point, it reveals the merits of purifying and cleansing. When falsehoods are exhausted, then the mind and spirit circulate freely and begin to produce a penetrating and radiant response. Aside from cultivating the mind, there is no other gate of practice.

The fifth question is: If it is the case that one attains Buddhahood only through cultivating the mind,

Line 20 (307b)

then why do all the *sutras* repeatedly say that attaining the Way necessarily involves adorning the Buddha-land and converting sentient beings?

My response is: While the mirror is bright, it reflects thousands of images. While the mind is pure, its spiritual power responds in a myriad ways. The reflected images resemble the majestic kingdom of the Buddha. With supernatural powers, then one can teach and convert living beings. Just as the majestic adornments [of the Buddha-lands] are [really] not adornments, so in reflected images the forms are not forms.

The sixth question is: All the *sutras* speak of releasing living beings from the wheel of transmigration. Yet if living beings are in fact not living beings, why labor to release them?

My response is: If [we can] in fact save living beings, then we should labor for their sake. If one says to oneself that they are in fact not living beings, then why not save them in the customary way, while [realizing] that there is no such thing as "salvation"?

The seventh question is: All the *sutras* say that the Buddha constantly abides, while some say that the Buddha entered *nirvana (mie du).* If [the Buddha] is permanent, then he cannot be extinguished, while if he is extinguished, then he is not permanent. Surely this is contradictory![31]

My response is: Departing from all forms is [characteristic] of all Buddhas. How can it be true that [Buddhas] appear in the world and enter *nirvana*? Whether they appear or disappear depends on potentiality and conditions.

Page 307C

If potentiality and conditions respond, then [the bodhisattva] will appear under the *[bodhi-]* tree. If potentiality and conditions are exhausted, then [the bodhisattva] will enter *nirvana* within the grove of Sal trees.[32] He is like pure water, without deliberate intention and without specific form. He does not manifest specific

[31]lit. "mutually opposing".

[32]The place of the Buddha's death (*SH* 323a),

form and is not possessed of an ego. The coming and going manifestations of outer substances are not the Buddha-body.[33] How could they be the appearance and disappearance of the Tathagata?

The eighth question is: What does what is produced by the Buddha's transforming power refer to, [is it] that I am produced like the other? Since the Buddha does not produce [anything], what is the meaning of production? If one says that when the mind produces, *dharmas* are produced, and that when the mind is extinguished, *dharmas* are extinguished, then how does one attain the *dharma*-forbearance of non-production?

My response is: As for transformations, they are indeed empty, and emptiness does not produce anything, so why do you question the meaning of production? When production and extinguishing are completely extinguished, then [the resulting] calmness and extinction are true thusness.

The ninth question is: All the Buddhas complete the Way and expound the *dharma* only for the sake of releasing the living beings from the wheel of transmigration. Since living beings have the six paths of transmigration, why does the Buddha still reside among human beings to manifest transformation?

Line 10 (307c)

Furthermore, after the Buddha's extinction, he entrusted the *dharma* to Kashyapa by means of mind-to-mind transmission. Up to the

[33]The threefold embodiment of Buddha (*SH* 229b).

seventh patriarch, [the *dharma* was] transmitted to one person in each generation. Since it is said that all living beings attain the mind-ground of the master (Buddhahood), why are transmissions and conferment not universal?

My response is: The sun and moon in the beautiful heavens shine together in the six directions, but the blind do not see this and those who are under a basin do not know it. It is not that the sun and moon do not [shine] universally, it is the fault of the screens and partitions. The meaning of [who is] saved and who is not is similar to this. It is not limited to humans and *devas* being distinguished from ghosts and beasts. It is only because [those in] the human path are able to assemble together, and transmit and confer without interruption. [Therefore,] it is only known that the Buddha appears among humans. After attaining *nirvana*, he entrusted [the *dharma*] to Kashyapa. In turn, it was passed down to one person [at a time]. This [person] was also probably known in the corresponding age as the master of the teaching. This is similar to the earth not having two kings [at the same time]. It is not that those who attain salvation are [limited to] only these few [leaders].

The tenth question is: What does a monk rely on to make a vow? In honor of what teaching does he leave the household life? How does one cultivate and practice to obtain what taste of the *dharma*?

<u>Line 20 (307c)</u>

With regard to what is practiced, what stage does one reach? Should one settle or cultivate the mind? If one settles the mind, then this interferes with cultivating the mind. If one cultivates the mind, then this stirs up thoughts so that they are not pacified. I ask, "Why is this called studying the Way?" If one pacifies the mind and unifies and composes it, then how is this different from disciples who settle the nature? I humbly desire you, Most Virtuous [One], to put great compassion, sympathy, true principle, and the absolute in motion to explain [answers to these questions] in turn.

My response is: One should realize that the four elements[34] are like brick tile illusions, understand that the six *gunas*[35] are like flowers in the sky, awaken to the fact that one's own mind is the Buddha-mind, and perceive that the fundamental nature is the *dharma* nature--[it is on this basis] that one makes a vow [to attain enlightenment]. Understanding that the mind is impermanent is [what one should] practice and cultivate. Understanding impermanence is the taste of the *dharma*. When permanence is manifested by *dharmas*, this stirs one's thoughts. Therefore, when people enter the dark they cannot see anything. But now, if one lacks a place upon which to settle [one's thoughts], then one does not pollute or display [anything]. Therefore, it is like when people have eyes and see all sorts of *dharmas* as clearly as the sun's radiance. How can these people possibly be disciples who settle the nature?

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[34]The four realms: earth, water, fire, and wind.

[35]The qualities produced by the organs and objects of sense (*SH* 134a).

Since they lack a place to settle [their minds], how can they talk about such a place? The Shang-shu Wen Zao of Shan-nan also asked a question:

Page 308a

People who have awakened to the fundamental principle and stopped falsehoods do not produce *karma*. After they die, what does their spiritual nature rely on?

My response is: All living beings possess an enlightened nature.[36] Their spiritual [nature] is enlightened, empty, quiet, and identical to that of the Buddha. But because for beginning-less *kalpas* they have not yet awakened, they falsely cling to the body as their own form, which therefore gives rise to love, hatred, and other passions. According with passions, they create *karma*. In accord with *karma*, they experience birth, old age, sickness, death, and revolve in *samsara* for many *kalpas*. Thus, the enlightened nature within the body is neither born nor dies.

However, it is like being driven and harassed in a dream while the body is fundamentally peaceful and relaxed. It is like the water making ice while its moist nature does not change. If one is able to awaken to the fact that this nature it is the *dharma* body, and that fundamentally is not reborn, then what is there to rely on? The numinous spirit is not darkened; intelligent and bright, it is

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[36]"The enlightened mind free from all illusion. The mind as agent of...enlightenment" (*SH* 480a).

constantly aware. [The enlightened nature] does not come from anyplace or go anywhere, yet it often gives rise to false clinging and a habitual nature, by which it forms joy, anger, grief, and delight that minutely circulate and penetrate [oneself].

Line 10 (308a)

Although the true principle is suddenly understood, these passions are difficult to remove completely. It is necessary to be aware of and examine them for a long time and destroy them again and again. It is like [the way] the wind ceases suddenly and waves stop gradually. How could it possibly be that what one has cultivated over one lifetime is just the same as the powers and abilities of the Buddhas? It is only appropriate to consider *nirvana* to be one's own body; do not recognize the body of form.[37] Consider spiritual understanding to be one's own mind; do not recognize false thoughts. If false thoughts arise, do not follow any of them. Then, when approaching the end of life, one's *karma* will naturally not be binding. Although there is that which the intermediate stage[38] inclines toward, one will be free,

Line 15 (308a)

and in heaven or in the human realm one will be reborn as one wishes. If thoughts of love and hate have already vanished, then one

[37]i.e., the corporeal body.

[38]The intermediate stage lies between death and reincarnation.

will not receive the body which one was fated to receive. One is thus able to change short into long and the mundane into the sublime, and if the [ability] minutely circulates and penetrates [oneself], then all will be calm and extinguished *(nirvana)*. Only [those who are] completely enlightened and very wise can exist independent and bright. Then, in accord with potentiality and response, they manifest countless bodies to save those living beings who have [karmic] affinities.[39] They are called Buddhas. I respectfully respond and explain this doctrine. The Bodhisattva Asvaghosa[40] gathered together and arranged the main ideas of 100 volumes of *Mahayana sutras*

Line 20 (308a)

in order to create his commentary on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. Within this commentary he established a doctrine. He expounded that the minds of all living beings possess an enlightened principle and an unenlightened principle. Within the enlightened [principle], there further exists a fundamental enlightenment principle and an initial enlightenment principle. Although what the former expounds only briefly illuminates the principle of absolute truth and speaks of it from the point of view of where one observes the mind, yet the meaning of his teaching is also identical to other

[39]Those living beings who "are influenced by and receptive to the Buddha" (*SH* 215a).

[40]The twelfth patriarch of Buddhism and a prolific writer who lived in Benares.

sastras which say that from the beginning one is identical to the Buddha. This is fundamental enlightenment.[41] From time without beginning, this has not been recognized. If people are able to realize this, they are initially enlightened.[42]

Line 25 (308a)

Within the process of first becoming enlightened, there are also sudden awakening and gradual cultivation. From this [point] one next reaches the stage of also lacking a place to go. This is sudden awakening. From [this stage], although one still often produces false clinging, this is gradual cultivation. Within gradual cultivation, from the time of the initial vow to attain complete enlightenment[43] until one reaches perfect Buddha-hood, there are three stages of spiritual independence. From this [stage] to the stage of being reborn as one wishes, one receives rebirth independently. From the time when there are thoughts of love and hatred, this is the stage of independent transformation. From the point of minute penetration to the end is the final stage of spiritual independence.

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[41]*Ben Jie* can also signify "Mind".

[42]"The initial functioning of mind or intelligence as a process of "becoming", arising from *ben jue* [fundamental enlightenment]..." (*SH* 254a).

[43]*fa xin*--"to start out for *bodhi* or perfect enlightenment; mental resolve or initiative..." (*SH* 384a).

Furthermore, when one is able to consider *nirvana* to be one's own body, then *karma* will naturally be unable to attach itself. This is precisely the essential point of those who have awakened to principle, cultivate the mind morning and evening, and practice cessation and contemplation. I previously had a *gatha* in eight lines which manifested this message and recited it at the residence of the Shang Shu [Wen Zao]. I received orders to explain it, so now I have respectfully annotated it. It is like the *gatha* which follows:

In doing things in accord with principle
the mind is passionless and awakened.
Doing things which are not in accord with principle [is due to]
the mind being wild and chaotic.
The wild and chaotic [mind] follow passions and thoughts
So, at death, one is dragged by *karma*.
The passionless and awakened [mind] does not stem from passions
So, at death one is able to transform *karma*.

Page 105B

The following commentary [deals with how] I, as a youth, focussed on the Confucian classics. This second narration relates a commentary on the fundamental causes.[1] There are five essays. The first concerns my fascination[2] with the Way and virtue. The second discusses the fundamental principle of sudden awakening. The third deals with joining together illusion and enlightenment. The fourth is how I gradually cultivated practice and interpretation. The fifth deals with how the master [Cheng Guan] received and accepted me. But now I shall begin.[3]

As for children, the *Lu Yun* says that as for small children, the years of early childhood are said to be the period up until ten years of age. The announcements of Lu are the Confucian teachings.[4]

Line 6 (105B)

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[1]lit. the primary and secondary causes.

[2]Reading *mi* as "fascination with".

[3]This first paragraph is taken from the *Da Shu Chao* 222a:11.

[4]Omission here.

Commentary on investigating the Indian classics[5]....The Indian classics are Buddhist teachings. *Zhu* is the country of India. The classics are also books[6]...which explain the great way and the constant way. But now I shall borrow the language of this method in order to illuminate the *sutras* and *sastras* within the Buddha's teaching.

Page 106a

The time when a child is capped only broadly indicates the approximate age at which he begins study. If I speak truthfully, then from the time I was seven years old until I reached sixteen or seventeen, I was a Confucian scholar. During the period from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, I wore the white robes of mourning[7] and resided in a simple hut listening to and studying the *sutras* and *sastras*, and I also covered the commentaries and explanations. At twenty-three, I again abandoned all of these meritorious [actions] and devoted myself to Confucianism; but upon reaching twenty-five years of age, I encountered propitious conditions and left the household life.

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[5]Skip to line 9 at this point.

[6]Reading *dian ji* from the *Da Shu Chao* 222b:2. Skip to line 11 at this point.

[7]Following Jan Yun-hua's interpretation which I will discuss at length elsewhere.

Commentary on how I was altogether drowned in traps and devices and only tasted dregs and chaff. My thoughts and words were solely devoted to literary writings, yet I did not grasp their meaning.

Line 5 (106A)

Moreover, in the Confucian schools, meaning lies in the Way, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, rites, wisdom, and faith. It does not lie in rushing forward, fame, or profit. There are those who would make their name known to later generations who consider the Way, virtue, filial piety, and practice to be notable, but do not consider official status, fame, talent, or skill to be notable. In Buddhist teaching, meaning lies in pervading one's own mind, cultivation, practice, meditation *(samadhi)*, and wisdom *(prajna)*; all stem from compassion and wisdom. They obviously do not lie in establishing oneself or one's occupation. At the same time, although we practice it, we still confuse it. Therefore, I say it is thus.

Traps are the tools of the southern people who catch fish.

Line 10 (106A)

Hoof-prints are a type of tool which [acts as] a device for seizing the hare after its tracks also leave prints. The trap is a metaphor. The prints illustrate[8] Confucianism. The commentary to the *Book of Changes* says, "Words are produced from images; therefore, one may

[8]"the obligations and teachings of the sages"

investigate words in order to perceive images. Images are produced from meaning; therefore, one may investigate images in order to perceive meaning. Meaning is exhausted by images; images are manifested by words. Therefore, by obtaining images, one forgets words; by obtaining meaning, one forgets the images." [This situation] is similar to the prints, which are the means by which one locates the hare. Getting the hare, one forgets about the prints. The trap is the means by which one locates the fish. Getting the fish, one forgets about the trap. If this is so, then words are the prints of images, and images are the traps for words. Maintaining the words is not [the same as] getting the image. Getting the image is not [the same as] getting the meaning. Images are produced from meaning yet maintain the image in them, so that which one maintains is not its image. Words are produced from images, yet maintain their words in them, so that which one maintains is not its words.

An explanation says: Use the prints to illustrate words and use a trap to illustrate images. When a trap enters the water it is not visible. The prints are on dry land

Page 106B (DSC 222c:3)

and may be perceived. Such is the knowledge of details. Furthermore, images pervade the active and passive;[9] therefore, the rabbit and the trap are two particulars which together are illustrated

[9]An example would be the ability to transform versus the object which is transformed (*SH* 336b).

by images, because, in viewing the active and the passive, their meanings are different. Furthermore, the outline also goes on to say, "If this is so, then those who forget images then attain the meaning, and those who forget words then attain the image." Attaining the meaning lies in forgetting images, and attaining images lies in forgetting words. Therefore, in establishing the image so as to exhaust the meaning, the meaning may be forgotten.[10]

Page 106c (DSC 222c:8)

[Commentary] on only tasting dregs and chaff (which are wine dregs and hemp chaff). The outer chapters of the Zhuang Zi say, "The way which the world esteems is writing. Writing does not go beyond words, yet words are esteemed. That which words esteem is meaning. In meaning there is that which follows. That which meaning follows may not be transmitted by words, but the people of the world, because they esteem words, transmit the writings. Although the world esteems it, some seem unworthy of esteem. If one says it is valuable, then it is not valuable.

line 5 (p106c)

Therefore, what one is able to see while looking is shapes and colors. What one is able to hear while listening is names and sounds. Alas! Humankind considers forms, names, sounds, and colors to be sufficient to attain that essence. As for forms, colors, names, and

[10]Omission here.

sounds, they really are not sufficient to attain that essence. Thus, those who know [the essence] do not speak, and those who speak do not know [the essence], but could there be anyone in the world who recognizes it?[11]

Page 106d (DSC 222d:9)

Commentary on my good fortune at the needle and mustard seed being thrown together[12] on the bank of the Fu River. This is the second commentary on the fundamental principle of sudden awakening.[13]

Line 5 (p.106d)

My native place is Guo-zhou. Due to the presence of an academy of philosophical (Confucian) studies in Sui-zhou, the Confucian teachings became very clear [to me], and I subsequently devoted myself to advancement and progress for two years.

After I had done this for two years, a monk from Xi-chuan who roamed about preaching and converting people arrived in this province, and we subsequently encountered one another. I questioned him on the *dharma* and my mind bonded just like the

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[11]Omission here.

[12]"The appearance of a Buddha is as rare as hitting the point of a needle on earth by a mustard seed thrown from the sky" (*SH* 340b).

[13]The two sentences are taken from the *Da Shu Chao* 222d:9. An omission follows.

needle and the mustard seed thrown together. The *sutras* explained how the Buddha questioned Kashyapa, "One mustard seed from the Tushita Heaven revolves at Jambudvipa[14] which stands upon the point of one needle which permits the mustard seed to be thrown at it. This situation is difficult to change." Kashyapa replied, "It is extremely difficult."

Line 10 (p.106d)

The Buddha said, "As for true primary causes and true secondary causes, obtaining a mutual encounter is even more difficult than this." But now I have attained a mutual encounter. Therefore, I say it was thrown.

Commentary on my encounter with the Southern School of Chan. The *dharma* which I obtained contained the main ideas of the monk [Hui-]Neng of the He-ce lineage of Ling-nan.

Commentary on coming across this statute. During the time that I was a novice in [Sui-zhou], I went in response to an invitation to a purification ritual *(zhai)* at the home of Ren Guan in Fu-li. Following the chanting of scriptures, I received this *Scripture of Complete Enlightenment (Yuan Jue Jing)*, and after I had read two pages, my unenlightened body and mind danced for joy. Nothing can compare to this [experience]. Henceforth, I have indulged in the pleasure [of studying the *Yuan Jue Jing*] until today.

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[14]The central division of the world in Buddhist cosmology.

Line 15 (p.106d)

I do not know if I had studied [this *sutra*] in previous lives, nor do I know what *karmic* conditions I possess [from previous lives]. All I feel is that the joy penetrated into my heart. I searched for the essays, commentaries, and all the craftsmen who [provided] explanations. For several years I did not grow weary [of this]. [15]

Page 107a (DSC 223a:7)

I examined all [four commentaries] backwards and forwards. Although these tastes [of the doctrine] mutually had both success and failure, none had yet put the *sutra* schools[16] in order.[17] Although there are several men who have encountered the discourses, they also explain how the firefly's glow is wondrous and exalted in the same way.

It is because of this *sutra* that I arranged all of the *sutras* and *sastras* of the *Dharma*-nature School, School of the Characteristics of Things, School which Destroys the Reality of Things, and the two Chan schools--the Northern, [which advocates] gradual enlightenment, and the Southern, [which advocates] sudden enlightenment. I also distinguished and unified the perfect teaching of the Hua-yan school,

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[15]Omission here.

[16]A "*sutra* school" is any school which bases itself on the *sutras*; for example, the Hua-yan school.

[17]This might refer to *pan-jiao*.

which is the complete and sufficient gate and door of awakening and cultivation.[18]

Line 5 (p.107a)

[It is therefore] difficult to arrive at such a person.[19] Consequently, I examined the essentials, deepened my meditation, and finished without becoming weary or fatigued.

Afterwards, based on my work on the extensive commentary of the "Clear and Cool"[20] Hua-yan Master of the great Capital, I thoroughly investigated the roots and examined the branches. Furthermore, I examined the Buddhist Canon. Everywhere I listened, practiced, inquired into, debated questions, and read [the scripture]. Character by character, I examined the Perfect Enlightenment *[Sutra]*, and compared its roots and branches in order to seek after its essentials. During the first month of the eleventh year of Yuan-he (816), I was just then at the Torch of Wisdom Monastery on Zhong-nan Mountain and set forth an outline, which I considered to be a framework. From scanning through the Buddhist Canon, I also turned to all the commentaries to investigate their meaning,

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[18]I am not confident that I understand the intent of the previous two paragraphs. Please compare this to the *Da Shu Chao* (223a:7).

[19]Perhaps this refers to a teacher who can exhaust the meaning of the *Yuan Jue Jing*.

[20]This refers to Cheng Guan.

Line 10 (p.107a)

and transcribed the outline appropriately. The compilation totaled two *juan*. Afterwards, I left [the monastery] to enter the capital city. From time to time I privately referred to it in order to interpret the sacred texts. Also, [I had] not yet dared to put the commentaries, *sastras*, and prefaces in order.[21] Due to discussing several chapters for my fellow disciples, gradual enlightenment was thoroughly removed and we were not stuck in suspicion and stagnation.

Afterwards, begging for alms[22] grew tiresome.

When the first month of the first year of Chang-qing arrived (821), I again withdrew to reside at the Grass Hut Monastery on Zhong-nan Mountain. I cut myself off completely, ceased all ties, nourished and refined nature and wisdom. By the spring of the second year, I then took what had previously constituted my outline, amounting to a two *juan* compilation, and also gathered together dozens of *sutras* and *sastras*, and several volumes of documents from all the [Chan] schools.

Line 15 (107A)

I took this as a lesson on striking at calmness. I lead the foolishness and made it into a commentary. In the midst of the summer of the third year, I just then accorded with merits and reached completion.

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[21]This would refer to *pan-jiao*.

[22]This can also mean "transformation of the living" (*SH* 142b).

Page 108A Line 17 (DSC 224b:14)

As for my encounter with the scriptures within Buddhism, I had not yet examined them or opened up and read them. This being the case, at the Wisdom Torch Monastery of Zhong-nan, I pledged an oath not to descend the mountain and spent three years reading through the entire canon.

108B

I wanted to descend the mountain only after I had finished [reading through it]. At the Cloud Abode, Grass Temple, Abundant Virtue, and other monasteries, I investigated the teachings of the sage for three and one-half years. As for the others, at all places and at all times I was not able to record them completely. For the past seventeen or eighteen years until today, I have not yet ceased [reading scripture]. Therefore, I say I am investigating all the texts.

Commentary to explain Number Five deals with how the master received and accepted me.[23] Since ancient times it has been transmitted that there exists in Pu-zhou [a person called] Bu Ting-tai and in Liu-zhou [a person called] Ban Bian-zhao. That person is clever, wise, and very virtuous. They can give lectures without having to listen. I belong to the walk of life which is foolish and inferior. In previous rebirths I had few causal seeds. Thus, I was

[23]This sentence is from *Da Shu Chao* (224c:1).

able to open up and investigate the Hua-yan commentary and vaguely saw its general shape, but I had not yet seen the master of the commentary, Cheng Guan, to become his disciple. At that time, I resided in the Eastern Capital (Luo-yang) and Xiang-zhou.

First, I used the traces to explain twice how the traces of past events are similar to old virtues; but the wise and the foolish are not the same, and therefore we say it is overflowing [bad]. Although brightness [enlightenment] lies in requesting to be accepted [as a disciple of Cheng Guan]. I reply that it is not simply not hearing. Therefore, [I] next said study further Master Dao An. In the fifth year of Yuan-he (810) at Xiang-zhou, I first expounded one chapter. In the sixth year at Luo-yang, I again expounded [this chapter].

Line 11 (108B)

Afterwards I entered Shang-du to personally serve Cheng Guan, the master of the commentary. I had studied with him for several years. For the first two years, day and night I did not leave [his side], even when I was later explaining the transmission in all the monasteries. Whenever I had doubts, our consultation back and forth never ceased. Master An was the *Dharma* Master Dao An. In his time, he was [the most prominent teacher] in the world. Thereafter, all the people said, "Study [his teachings], but do not take Master An as your teacher. One cannot penetrate the meaning [of his teachings]."

Line 14 (108B)

Commentary on receiving favor. On the day I was at the eastern capital, due to my expounding [the Hua-yan Commentary], the disciple Tai-gong then cut off his arm to celebrate the *dharma*. The imperial representative reported the incident to the Prime Minister Zheng Yu-jing[24] and the Secretariat to wait for his decision. Within the report he referred to [me] as a Hua-yan disciple. Prime Minister Lu sought to question Cheng Guan, the commentary master, [about me]. Since the commentary master had not yet made my acquaintance, I feared that he would not receive me [as a disciple]. Consequently, I created a general framework of what all the explanations had indicated and interpreted. I connected the key passages and points within the twenty-*juan* commentary and assembled them in a seven or eight page [letter]. Hence, I sent the junior monks Xuan Gui

Page 108C (224c:17)

and Zhi Hui to report to the superior commentary master in order to clearly explain that it was not careless speech. The commentary master responded [to the letter].

Page 109B (Line 12) (DSC 225c:14)

Commentary on the compilations.[25] Thereupon in the fourteenth year of Yuan-he (819) at the Arising of Blessings

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[24]From *Da Shu Chao* (224c:14).

[25]The first line is taken from the *Da Shu Chao* (DSC 225c:14).

Monastery, I collected the two *sastras* of Vasubandhu and Asanga (The Great Cloud and other commentaries and the Initiating the Opening), [Seng] Zhao and others and drew on their major points in order to explain the *Diamond Sutra*. The commentary was one *juan*, and the subcommentary was [also] one *juan*.

Line 18 (109B)

In the second year of Chang-qing (822) at the Monastery of Abundant Virtue on the Southern Mountain, I discussed the key points of the sacred text by means of the passages and points within the commentary. This was so as to permit a lecturer to gain command of the meaning and remember it in order to explain this commentary. It totalled five *juan* and I called it *Assembling the Threads of the Hua-yan* (*Hua-yan Lun Guan*).

Line 6 (109C) (DSC 225d:4)

In the summer of the third year of Chang-qing (823) at the Monastery of Abundant Virtue, based on hearing the next I compiled the *Vinaya* texts and commentary, and took them to create something which the disciples would want to practice and use. I raised it up and invented it to guide the followers. It was three *juan*.

Line 11 (109C)

From the winter of the fourteenth year of Yuan-he (819) to the spring of the fifteenth year at the Arising of Blessings Monastery at

Shang-du and the Nourishing Longevity Monastery, I selected great *sastras*, commentaries, pure essence and correct meaning in order to explain the thirty fundamental verses,[26] which totalled two *juan*. This is to manifest and clearly display the teachings of the Consciousness-Only School in order to lead people to easily see the principle that all *dharmas* are only [manifestations created by] one's own mind.

Line 8 (109D) (DSC 226a:12)

The meaning and essential element are perpendicular and horizontal [opposed]. For the flow of the novice's mind [this *Hua Yan Sutra*] is confusing and difficult to enter. It is like the way in which one is not able to seek after all the treasures within the great ocean. Thus, it is not like this *[Yuan Jue Jing]*, for which the whole volume may be entered at once.

Page 110A (DSC 226b:6)

The fourth correct writing is the commentary to this *sutra*, [the *Yuan Jue Jing*].[27] Its roots originated in the spring of the 11th year of Yuan-he (816) at the Torch of Wisdom monastery on Nan-shan whereby I wrote the outline and classification and searched for the meaning of the commentaries of the four schools. The [resulting] compilation was two-*juan*. I privately recorded and collected it in

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[26]Peter Gregory notes that these are the verses of Vasubandhu.

[27]Taken from *DSC* (226b:6)

order to comment on the sacred texts which had been dispersed by those who studied meditation.

From then until the second year of Chang-qing (822) at the Grass Hut Monastery, I again worked on the commentary and also cleared the way for several dozen essay chapters. When the fall and winter of the third year arrived, I just then attained completion. [I relied on] all the *sastras* [such as the] Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, Consciousness-Only, Precious Nature, Buddha-nature, Meditation on the Mean *(Zhong Guan)*, Gathering Together the Great Vehicle *(She Da Cheng)*, Perfection of Wisdom *(Zhi Du)*, *Yogacara (Yu Jia)*, the *Mahayana Sutras* and others.

<u>**Line 12 (110A)**</u> (DSC 226b:18)

"Good tools are the prerequisite to the successful execution of a job."[28] It was necessary to sharpen my tools. I clearly wanted to create a commentary to the *Yuan Jue Jing*. Therefore, I first practiced all the teachings for more than ten years in order to hone my wisdom, and broaden my studies. Only then did I create the commentary.

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[28]Liang Shih-ch'iu (p.260) #1293.